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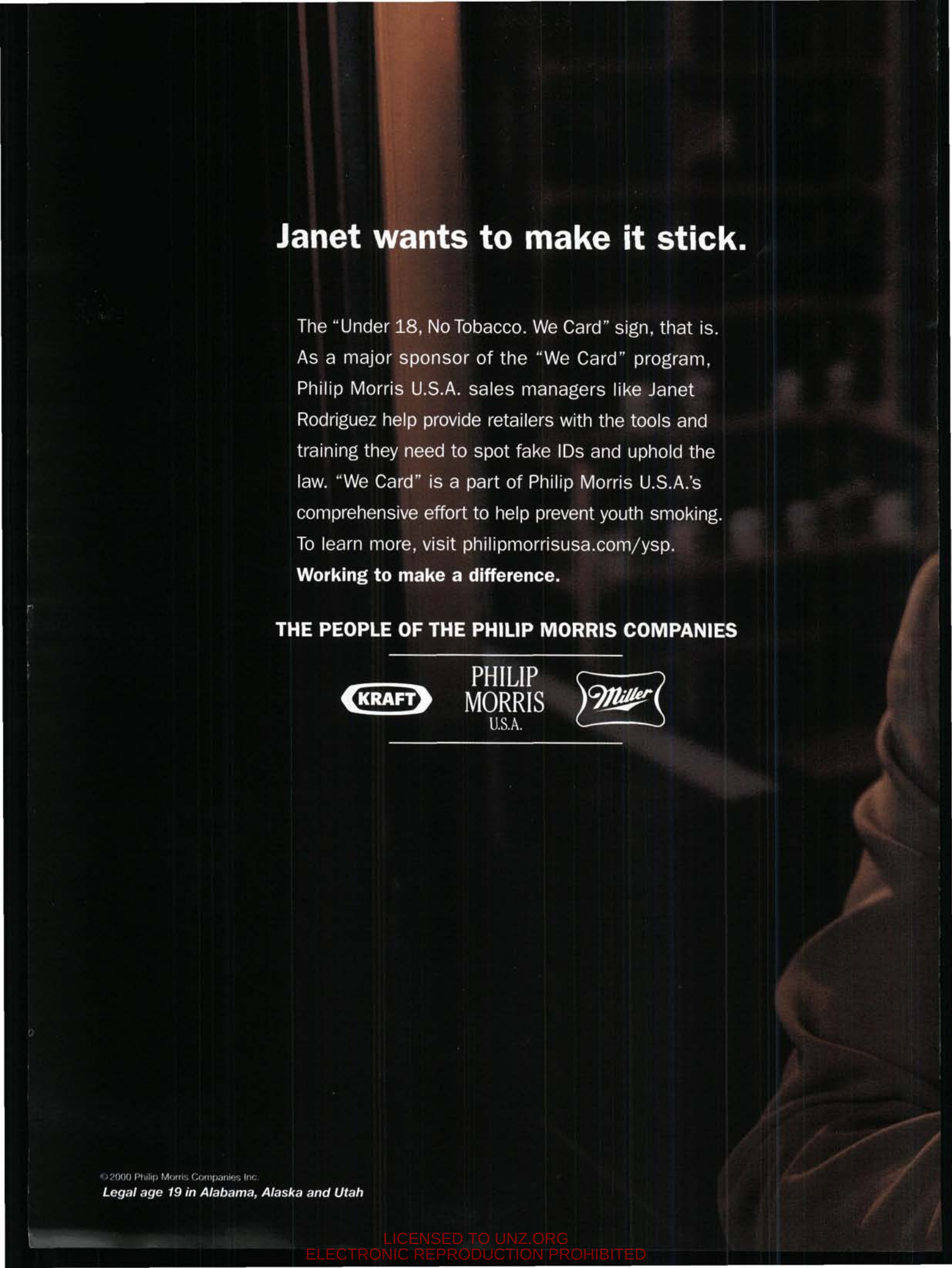
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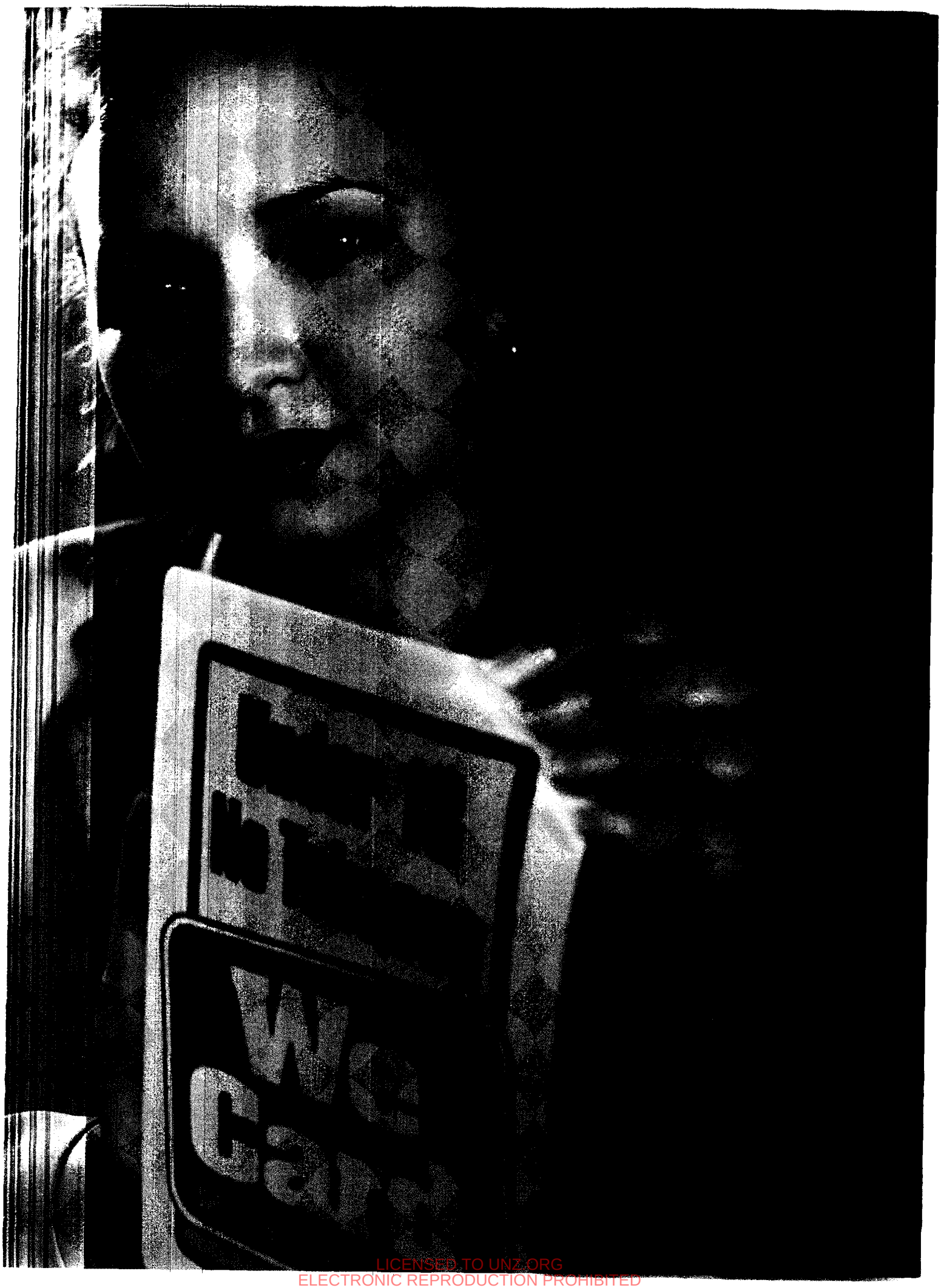

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Fight over Liberty

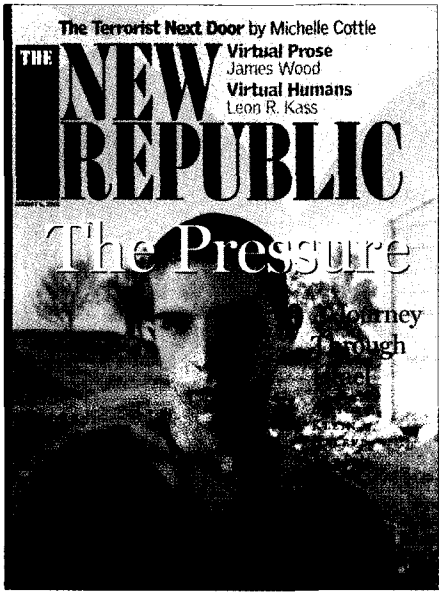
TO THE EDITORS:

A recent article by Michael Oren related to a chapter in my book *Body of Secrets: Anatomy of the Ultra-Secret National Security Agency*, in which I discuss Israel's massive, unprovoked, daylight attack on the NSA eavesdropping ship USS *Liberty* on June 8, 1967 ("Unfriendly Fire," July 23). Thirty-four Americans were killed and another 171 were wounded when Israeli fighters and torpedo boats assaulted the ship for more than an hour with cannon fire, rockets, heavy bombs, burning napalm, and five torpedoes—hitting it dead center with one and virtually destroying the vessel.

Israel claimed the attack was an accident—the *Liberty*, it said, was mistaken for an Egyptian ship. But Israeli reconnaissance planes had positively identified the ship. And throughout the attack, according to survivors, the *Liberty* was flying a large American flag, had its name painted in English in ten-foot letters across the stern, never fired a shot, and was only lightly armed.

The evidence that Israel's attack was deliberate is overwhelming. Among those who never believed Israel's explanation are the survivors and the captain of the ship; the then-director, deputy director, and deputy operations chief of NSA, which was in possession of the most detailed intelligence on the attack; Secretary of State Dean Rusk; the chief of naval operations (and later chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) Admiral Thomas Moorer; and many others.

I was not surprised that THE NEW REPUBLIC would find someone to do a biased hatchet job on the subject of the USS *Liberty*. (*The Washington Post* has called Martin Peretz, the magazine's owner, "fiercely pro-Israel.") What did surprise me was that the magazine would assign the article to a writer at an organization run by someone who once wrote a fawning tribute to Israel's most violent and racist hatemonger, the late Rabbi Meir Kahane. Israel's Shalem Center, where Oren is a senior fellow, has been called "extreme right-wing and even fascistic" by no less than a spokesman for the Israeli Education Ministry (albeit not on behalf of her organization). It is run by Yoram Hazony, who has written in *The Jerusalem Post* of his "gratitude" to Kahane as "someone who changed our lives." "We found ourselves drawn to Kahane," he wrote, "because unlike any other 'leader' we had ever met, he was willing to say what needed to be said." (In the same piece he does repudiate Kahane's violent tactics.)



Curiously, Oren does not take issue with the mountain of evidence in my book indicating that Israel knew that the ship was American. Instead he focuses on several peripheral issues. One is the war crimes reportedly taking place on the Sinai, within earshot of the *Liberty*, and my quotes from Gabi Bron and Aryeh Yitzhaki. Yet all of this information was widely published more than five years ago in such publications as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. For example, an Associated Press report that appeared in *The Montreal Gazette* on August 17, 1995, says: "Military historian Aryeh Yitzhaki said yesterday that Israeli troops carried out several mass killings in 1967 in which some 1,000 Egyptian prisoners were killed in the Sinai. Yitzhaki, who worked in the army's history department after the war, said he and other officers collected testimony from dozens of soldiers who admitted killing prisoners.... Yitzhaki said a report on the killings submitted to his superiors has been locked away in a safe at military headquarters."

Regarding Gabi Bron, *The New York Times* on August 21, 1995, said: "At the same time, a reporter for *Yediot Ahronot*, Gabi Bron, described atrocities that he witnessed in the 1967 war: 'The Egyptian prisoners of war were ordered to dig pits and then army police shot them to death. I witnessed the executions with my own eyes in the morning of June 8, in the airport area of El Arish.'"

Next Oren charges that an Egyptian whom I cite as confirming the massacre was "anonymous" and therefore "impossible to verify." In fact, the Egyptian is not "anonymous," I gave his name: Mr. Abdelsalam Moussa.

Then Oren makes the claim that "Egypt has ruled the Sinai for over 20 years, yet it has never uncovered any mass grave." Another outright falsehood, as can be seen in a front-page article in *The New York Times* on September 21, 1995: "Egypt said today that it had discovered two mass graves in the Sinai [near El Arish] containing the remains of Egyptian prisoners of war and unarmed civilians shot by Israeli soldiers during the 1967 war."

Finally, Oren cites my quotes from Marvin Nowicki, a Hebrew linguist in a Navy eavesdropping plane flying above the ship at the time of the attack. Nowicki heard both the pilots and torpedo boat crew members referring to the American flag during the attack, facts the Israeli investigators did not appear to acknowledge in their report. Nowicki, says Oren, claims that the torpedo boats stopped firing immediately after sighting the flag. This is denied by members of the *Liberty* crew, who say the Israelis continued to shoot up the life rafts and men attempting to flee the burning ship. Further, Oren makes no mention of the fact that Nowicki also heard the pilots talk about the American flag. In fact, another Hebrew linguist on the plane also heard the same references and is confident that the Israeli attack was deliberate.

Turning to an organization run by someone who writes admiringly of an Israeli hatemonger for an untruthful and biased article on the *Liberty* is the ultimate insult to the hundreds of brave Americans killed and wounded during the attack. Peretz and TNR should be ashamed.

JAMES BAMFORD
Washington, D.C.

MICHAEL OREN REPLIES:

In his efforts to spin a conspiracy theory around the *Liberty* incident, James Bamford resorts to dubious press reports and distorts the few dependable sources he cites. Groping for a motive behind Israel's actions, Bamford persists in quoting press interviews, culled from reports in *The New York Times* and the AP, the same AP report, with Gabi Bron and Aryeh Yitzhaki alleging Israeli war crimes in the Sinai. When contacted directly by me, both Bron and Yitzhaki categorically denied the remarks attributed to them in those reports and insisted that no such massacres took place.

Bamford also believes that al-Ahram, Egypt's state-run organ notorious for its anti-Zionism, is a legitimate source on Israel. Al-Ahram made the claim that mass graves had been found in Sinai. Bamford also quotes a *New York Times*

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interview with an Egyptian, identified only by name and former army rank, without revealing that the interview was also taken from al-Ahram.

There was no massacre in the Sinai. Nor does Bamford produce any evidence that would link such a nonevent to the *Liberty* incident. His theory is pure speculation. Though Bamford implies that I have not interviewed *Liberty* survivors, my research in fact incorporates hundreds of pages of crew members' testimonies. Bamford, by contrast, does not appear to have spoken to a single Israeli and seems to totally ignore the vital Israeli files on the incident. Instead of providing hard evidence, he mentions the views of Dean Rusk, who opposed Israel's creation in 1948, and Admiral Thomas Moorer, another known critic of Israel. He also cites NSA officials whose agency sent a spy ship unannounced into a foreign war zone in gross violation of presidential orders.

Apart from these compromised sources, Bamford can evince not one shred of proof of Israeli deliberation in the *Liberty* attack. On the other hand, Bamford leaves out evidence that the attack was accidental. He omits the testimony of Professor Marvin Nowicki, the former NSA operative, asserting that the attack was a mistake and that Israel's jets would not have seen the *Liberty*'s flag. He ignores military transcripts confirming that the Israelis believed they were striking an Egyptian ship.

My TNR article accused Bamford of ethnic defamation in claiming, utterly without foundation, that American Jewry blackmailed Congress into suspending an investigation of the *Liberty* incident. Interestingly, he makes no attempt to refute this charge. Like his book, Bamford's letter is rife with fabrications. No "heavy bombs" were used in the attack (Bamford's own book says the heavy bombs were requested but gives no indication that they ever arrived or were used), and the U.S. Naval Court's Findings of Fact indicate that the ship's hull markings, rather than the name *Liberty*, were painted on the ship's hull. And, again according to the U.S. Naval Court, the *Liberty* aimed machine-gun fire at the approaching Israeli boats, prompting them to release their torpedoes. Such facts are crucial for any serious researcher investigating the truth of what happened to the *Liberty*.

YORAM HAZONY REPLIES:

James Bamford seeks to smear me and the institution I head with the baseless claim that I was once a supporter of the far-right politician Rabbi Meir Kahane. In fact, I never supported Kahane and have always categorically opposed the violent and racist views he represented.

Bamford cites a *Jerusalem Post* article I wrote days after Kahane's murder, in November 1990, in which I recalled the effect of one of his speeches on Jewish students at Princeton years earlier. But he neglects to mention that I stressed in this article that I was a "non-Kahanist" and that "[n]either I nor any of my friends from college ever adopted Kahane's political views. We were never able to reconcile the Judaism we learned," I wrote, "with his predilection for violent solutions to problems."

My actual views concerning the anti-Arab violence and racism Kahane was peddling can be found in a pair of editorials I wrote for *The Jerusalem Post* at that time entitled "Without Bigotry" (October 26, 1990) and "Kach Hooliganism" (November 27, 1990). In the former, I called for the government to "spare no effort" in combating Jewish violence and racism against Arabs. "Both preaching and practicing violence with ethnic motivation are unacceptable in Israel," I concluded, "no matter who the perpetrators."

The new New Delhi

TO THE EDITORS:

I am writing to commend Lawrence F. Kaplan for his insightful article on the new and evolving relationship between America and India ("Missile Defense's Children," August 6). He has done an excellent job of tracing the history of the often-strained relationship between the two countries and explaining the imperatives driving them closer. But his most telling comment is his closing paragraph: that the most important reason for a closer relationship between America and India is moral. As an Indian-American, I fervently hope that this new relationship does not fade away like a teenage infatuation but rather develops into a strong and lasting marriage.

MAHESH SANKARAN
Birmingham, Alabama

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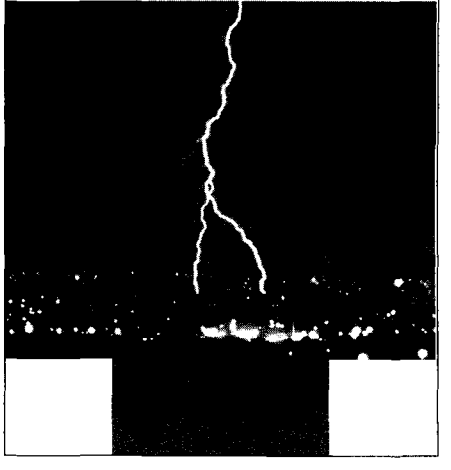

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Going South

OF COURSE SOUTH AFRICA is hosting the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance—it's the most politically correct country on Earth. South Africa's constitution outlaws discrimination based on "race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth." South Africa doesn't just guarantee the right to abortion, it guarantees a minor the right to a publicly funded abortion without her parents' consent. The death penalty is outlawed. Every employer must submit an annual report documenting its efforts to hire and promote blacks. The government refers to schoolchildren as "learners" and teachers as "facilitators of knowledge."

Don't get me wrong—this is a vast improvement over what came before. For a country whose military once tried to "cure" gay men with electroshock therapy to now guarantee that gays and lesbians can serve in the armed forces is a wonderful thing. And the world has rewarded South Africa by making it the undisputed capital of international conferences. With its developed world infrastructure and developing world cachet, South Africa has in recent years hosted the Rugby World Cup, the Non-Aligned Movement conference, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the Parliament of the World's Religions, and the 13th International AIDS Conference.

So Durban, on South Africa's steamy Indian Ocean coast, is the perfect place to showcase the World Conference Against Racism—and the perfect place to showcase the conference's irrelevance. To listen to the speakers assembled this week, you'd think racism was one of post-apartheid South Africa's most pressing challenges. It's not. In a recent survey conducted by the South African Institute of Race Relations, South Africans ranked racism as the country's ninth-biggest problem. Among the issues they cared about more were unemployment, crime, poor housing, substandard health care, lack of safe drinking water, and AIDS. In other words, roughly the same list you'd find in most Third World countries. But, with the exception of AIDS, none of these subjects merits high-profile, glitzy international conferences. Western governments don't want to talk about them because they are too far away. And Third World governments don't want to talk about them because they are too close to home.

Take education. There's no question that inadequate schooling stunts the lives of far more black South Africans than does racism. How do we know? Because the 10 percent of black South Africans with high school diplomas have seen their standard of living improve dramatically since apartheid's end, while the other 90 percent have seen little gain at all. So why isn't Durban hosting an international conference on primary and secondary education? For one thing, because the West wouldn't pay much attention. In recent years the American press has written countless stories about South Africa's efforts to expiate its racist past—about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; about the renaming of streets, airports, and government buildings; about the conversion of Nelson Mandela's prison into a museum. It has written precious little about the fact that 40 percent of the country's schools have no running water and half have no electricity. The U.S. media is primarily interested in South Africa as a metaphor for domestic race relations; and when South Africans try to talk about anything else, Americans quickly lose interest. (That's also why Americans paid attention to last year's international conference on AIDS but would barely notice a conference on, say, malaria—because the former, unlike the latter, affects us.) Similarly, Europeans might support reparations for colonialism or they might fiercely oppose them, but at least they pay attention to the debate—because ultimately it's about them.

Which suits Third World governments fine, because they, too, would rather talk about the West. If the United Nations says racism is the Third World's biggest problem, it is also implicitly saying that the West—not Third World regimes themselves—bears primary responsibility for Third World suffering. So Asian, African, and Middle Eastern leaders come to the racism conference as accusers, whereas they would come to a conference on education or health care, at least in part, as the accused. South African President Thabo Mbeki might be asked, for instance, why misguided government policies have led more than 8,000 of his country's teachers to leave the profession over the past three years, contributing to a grave shortage. Or why incompetence and waste led 28 percent of the government's budget for hospital rehabilitation—and 12 percent of its budget for nutrition—to go unspent last year.

Or imagine the questions that might be asked of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe—a man whose appropriate interaction with the international community should be as a war crimes defendant. Instead, while European democracies flagellate themselves and America cowers at home, Mugabe is treated, in the perverse universe of the Durban conference, like a moral paragon. After all, what Durban is saying to the world, Mugabe is saying at home. Mugabe's critics decry Zimbabwe's epic corruption, skyrocketing unemployment, and crumbling schools and hospitals. But Mugabe says all this is a distraction from the real problem: racism. And he has a plan to stamp it out—by sending thugs to violently confiscate the racists' land, thus chasing Zimbabwe's white farmers back to Britain, from whence they came.

Mugabe's Zimbabwe, it's true, is far worse than most of the Third World governments denouncing white racism in Durban this week. But it is a cautionary tale. Because the longer a Third World government refuses to take responsibility for the real problems afflicting its people—poor education, substandard health care, unemployment—the louder it must denounce racists, and other alien oppressors, to maintain its power. (Which may help explain why the Arab countries are more insistent than ever that Zionism equals racism.) After a while, vague, far-off racists will no longer do, and scapegoats must be found at home: whites in Zimbabwe, Indians in Uganda, Chinese in Indonesia.

South Africa, the country on which an entire continent's future depends, could itself go this way. Or it could deploy its awesome natural and human resources against the corruption, violence, and ignorance that scar so many of its people. Last year, when a white opposition leader criticized the government's response to AIDS, a top government official accused him of an "entrenched white racism that is a millennium old." But two years earlier that same official declared that "[t]he thieves and their accomplices, the givers of the bribes and the recipients are as African as you and I. We are the corrupter and the harlot who act together to demean our continent and ourselves." The official who evinced these contradictory impulses is Thabo Mbeki. Which one do you think is being reinforced in Durban this week?

PETER BEINART

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Child Abuse

"THE PURPOSE OF the bill was to send a message to lesbians and gay men that we're really tired of you. We wish you'd go back into the closet." Thus spake Curtis Peterson, the state senator who fathered Florida's 1977 law barring gays and lesbians from becoming adoptive parents—the most restrictive such law in the nation. Peterson is now deceased, but his handiwork lives on, upheld last week by a Florida federal court against a constitutional challenge brought by the ACLU on behalf of four gay men who wish to adopt children. U.S. District Court Judge James Lawrence King rejected the state's first argument: that the law expresses "moral disapproval of homosexuality." And, in so doing, he acknowledged that bigotry for its own sake is not protected by the Constitution. But King, citing deference to the state legislature rather than endorsement of the law itself, allowed the bigoted legislation to stand. In his ruling, he upheld the state's second argument: that the law is constitutional because "a child's best interest is to be raised in a home stabilized by marriage, in a family consisting of both a mother and a father."

Sounds good. Unfortunately, it's total garbage. For starters, it's unclear how Florida's legislature determined that a two-gender family is in "a child's best interest." Research in no way indicates that gays and lesbians make worse parents than do heterosexuals. In fact, a study presented at last month's meeting of the American Psychological Association suggests that teens with lesbian co-parents report feeling *more* nurtured than do those with heterosexual stepparents of either gender. Granted, you can argue—as King did in his ruling—that homosexual families may prove "more socially stigmatizing than married heterosexual families." Then again, a similar argument could be made about mixed-race families—but, rightly, it isn't.

In its preference for two-parent families over single-parent ones, the state is on stronger ground. Studies show that kids raised by single parents are more likely to live in poverty and may be slightly more likely to engage in anti-social behavior. But that distinction turns out to be entirely irrelevant to the Florida adoption law—because the Sunshine State doesn't require that kids be placed in a "a home stabilized by marriage." Fully one-quarter of Florida's adoptions each year are by single parents. In fact, pretty much anyone in the Sunshine State is technically eligible to become an adoptive parent, including individuals with histories of substance abuse and domestic violence. Anyone, that is, except for gays and lesbians.

But it gets worse. To understand the full absurdity of the law King upheld, consider this additional fact: While Florida discriminates against gays on adoption, it allows them to serve as foster parents to the 3,400 children languishing in the state's foster care system. In other words, gays are more than welcome to pour their blood, sweat, tears, and money into caring for these often-troubled, hard-to-place children. But should they try to make their families official—thus giving kids the stability that all the research shows they desperately need—the state will step in. One of the cases before King involved a foster dad hoping to adopt one of the three children—all HIV-positive from birth—he has spent the past decade raising. Another was brought by a man seeking to adopt a nine-year-old boy whose alcoholic father had left him in the man's care five years earlier. *Let* these gay men adopt? Florida should give them medals.

Predictably, the "family values" crowd is elated by King's ruling. Ken Connor, president of the Family Research Council, explained to *The Washington Post*: "[T]o suggest that a man can substitute for a mother or a woman for a father is to misunderstand the inherent differences between men and women." (On the question of a loving, responsible gay man substituting for an alcoholic straight man, Connor was silent.) The Reverend Lou Sheldon, head of the California-based Traditional Values Coalition, was even more direct. "Studies have proven that homosexuality is a socially dysfunctional behavior," he told the *Los Angeles Times*. (Sheldon, a man not known for his deep grasp of, or respect for, social science, did not explain which studies he meant.) "Therefore," he concluded, "the state knows it cannot contribute to a child's stability by condoning that lifestyle." Jeb Bush, bravely, left his response to a spokesman. The governor supported the ruling, one of his press secretaries said, but would not explain why. In Washington, not a single prominent conservative politician criticized the decision. President Bush, gearing up for his fall "values" tour, has declined any comment. We wish we could say were surprised. ■

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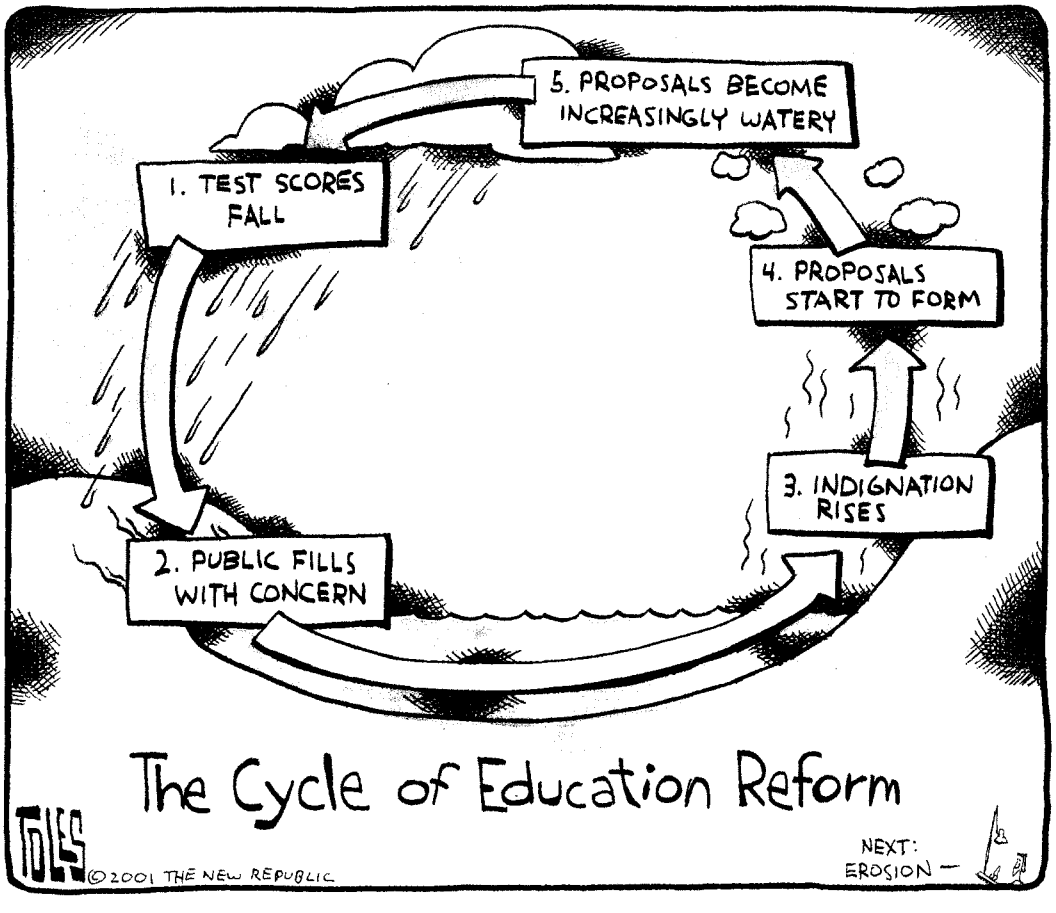
NOTEBOOK

A TIMELY WITHDRAWAL: The Bush administration's foreign policy has been confused, contradictory, shy of values, beholden to interests, hostage to internecine bureaucratic tussles, frustrating for many of America's friends and satisfying for many of America's enemies, a mess—except regarding one of the world's conflicts, where it shines. We refer to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, concerning which the Bush administration has wisely resisted any resort to the failed methods and bankrupt ideas of peace-processing, and elected instead to make it perfectly clear that it stands by America's historical alliance with Israel. It seemed for a while that the administration's reluctance to involve itself in the conflict was motivated merely by self-interest: The memory of Bill Clinton's shipwreck on the Middle Eastern shoals is still fresh. But last week it became apparent that the administration is moved also by principle. The American walkout of the United Nations Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban was truly a sterling moment, an unequivocal act of moral leadership. When the conference on racism itself became racist, the Americans left, which is exactly what they should do under such repugnant circumstances. Colin Powell's decision not to go to Durban could not have been easy, since the search for racial justice at home and abroad animates him deeply, but it set an exemplary American tone; and this tone was perfectly expressed in the secretary of state's explanation of the American walkout: "[Y]ou do not combat racism by conferences that produce declarations containing hateful language, some of which is a throwback to the days of 'Zionism equals racism,' or supports the idea that we have made too much of the Holocaust, or suggests that apartheid exists in Israel, or that singles out only one country in the world, Israel, for censure and abuse." Golden, invigorating words.

PRESUMED INNOCENT: With George W. Bush in the White House, you'd think the National Organization for Women would have plenty of issues on its plate. But apparently it's not so full as to keep the group from adopting as its pet cause Andrea Yates, the Texas woman facing life imprisonment or possible execution for drowning her five children. NOW has joined Yates's lawyers in arguing that the stay-at-home mom was driven to kill her kids by postpartum psychosis; members of the group are planning a jailside candlelight vigil on September 12, the eve of Yates's next court appearance. This is indefensible. Yates may indeed be mentally ill: She has a history of severe postpartum depression, including two suicide attempts. But this is an issue to be decided in court—after all, a horrific crime was inarguably committed. But NOW has decided that it is uninterested in the legal requirements of an insanity defense or in any details regarding Yates's mental state that might emerge during trial. The organization has denounced the very act of *prosecuting* Yates as "callous" and "totally inhumane." Much as we appreciate NOW's offer to act as judge, jury, and mental health expert, we prefer the old-fashioned system. Indeed, the suggestion that Yates's alleged crime should not be subject to the scrutiny of a court trial simply because hormones may have been involved is an insult not only to her five young victims but to the millions of women who battle through postpartum depression and psychosis without slaughtering their families. In the end, a jury might well sentence Yates to counseling and treatment—an outcome that would likely increase public understanding and acceptance of the reality of postpartum depression. NOW's extrajudicial campaign, on the other hand, may do exactly the reverse.



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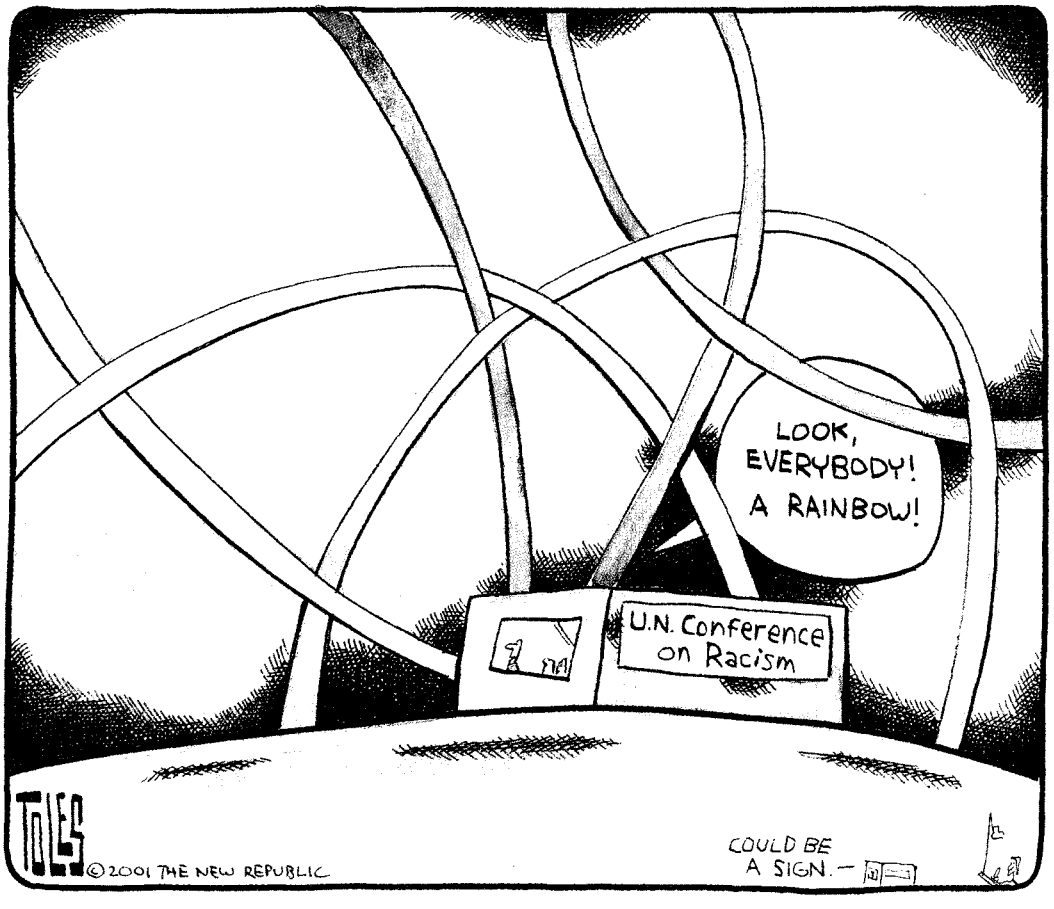
SON STROKE: When you hear the name Jimmy Hoffa, a few of the phrases that don't spring immediately to mind are "above board" and "good man." Unless, that is, you're President Bush, who thus described the younger Hoffa—who, like his father before him, heads the Teamsters—on Labor Day. The Teamsters are currently under federal oversight due to a past lack of democratic practices and associations with organized crime. And one of Hoffa's primary goals is to end federal oversight, which means he has to cozy up to whomever is in the White House. Last year Hoffa declined to endorse Al Gore until September—coincidentally enough, the precise moment when he surged ahead in the polls. Since Bush took office, Hoffa has found many favorable qualities in the new president and even provided crucial political muscle to pass Bush's plan for oil-drilling in Alaska through the House. As a result, Bush and his conservative allies now view the Teamsters as the pinnacle of enlightened unionism. A recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial praised the Teamsters for embodying "the only glimmers of economic sense within the labor movement." And on Labor Day Bush granted Hoffa the full Putin treatment, gushing at length about his goodness and decency and hinting that federal oversight might come to an end. For years, Democrats have turned a blind eye toward the seamier corners of organized labor in return for political support. Republicans used to find this arrangement corrupt. Until, that is, they got in on it.

TICK, TOCK: Last month, TNR noted the Bush administration's flouting of the spirit—and in all likelihood the letter—of the Presidential Records Act by holding up the release of 68,000 pages of Reagan administration documents slated to be made public last January 20 (see "Cover Letter," by Josh Chafetz, August 27 & September 3). When that article was published, the White House had already demanded two extensions of the deadline, the second of which expired on August 31. But on that date White House counsel Alberto Gonzales sent a letter to the National Archives demanding yet another delay—this time without even deigning to specify a date, merely declaring that the White House would take "a few additional weeks" to review the papers. Why the interminable—and apparently illegal—delays? After all, Ronald Reagan's office has confirmed that it has not requested them. Perhaps an answer can be gleaned in the last sentence of Gonzales's letter: "This directive again applies also to the Vice Presidential records of former Vice President George H. W. Bush."

HOME NEWS: It is with regret that we announce the end of Andrew Sullivan's one-year stint as author of the magazine's TRB column. Every week, Andrew brought to our pages his sharp wit, writerly grace, and keen eye for sacred cows in need of tipping over. Happily, Andrew will remain at the magazine as a senior editor contributing regular, longer articles. (Those readers requiring a more frequent fix may find it daily at his website, *www.andrewsullivan.com*.) Beginning this week, TRB will be written by editor Peter Beinart, whose weekly column, "Punditry," had appeared at *www.thenewrepublic.com*.



HOME NEWS II: We are delighted to announce the publication of TNR Israel correspondent Yossi Klein Halevi's *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden: A Jew's Search for God With Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land*. The book—the culmination of a two-year "journey of religious empathy" in which Klein Halevi spent time with monks, nuns, and Sufi sheikhs—is being released by William Morrow this month. ■

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The real Condit scandal.

Blood Sport

By Sarah Wildman

Last week, when Chad and Cadee Condit resigned from the staff of California Governor Gray Davis after he publicly criticized their father, the cable TV shows reported it as yet another wrinkle in the never-ending Chandra Levy saga. But they should have asked a different question: What were the Condits doing in those jobs in the first place? Answer: benefiting from one of the most widespread practices in politics—securing one's political allies by employing their relatives.

Once upon a time, politicians used to hire members of their *own* family. But after JFK famously appointed his brother Robert as attorney general and brother-in-law Sargent Shriver as head of the Peace Corps, Congress passed the 1967 "Bobby Kennedy law," barring future presidents from giving close relatives Cabinet-level appointments. And so, over time, elected officials informally developed an indirect, reciprocal sort of nepotism: You hire my family, I'll hire yours.

By 1987, when UPI analyzed congressional employment records over an 18-month stretch, it found a whopping 73 relatives of House and Senate members in paid positions on Capitol Hill (if it had included unpaid interns, the number would have been higher). Included on the rolls were Douglas and Nicole Boxer (children of Senator Barbara); a brother, son, and nephew of then-Massachusetts Representative Joseph Early; and Claire Domenici, daughter of the senator from New Mexico. Diane Grassley, daughter of Senator Charles, spent 1986 as a staff assistant to a Republican congressman from Iowa, her father's state. Jim Bunning, then a congressman, employed a fellow House member's daughter.

Ronald Reagan gave jobs in the United States Information Agency to both Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's son and Secretary of State Alexander Haig's daughter. And Bush père nominated a cousin to a federal judgeship. But the practice seems to have heated up—surprise!—under Bill Clinton. At the request of Thurgood Marshall, Clinton made the justice's son a U.S. marshal. He later appointed another Marshall child to be an assistant to the president for Cabinet affairs. Ted Kennedy's sister, Jean Kennedy Smith, became ambassador to Ireland. And, in a dubious feminist twist, Clinton became the first president to fully extend this brand of nepotism to politicians' wives (in the past, the recipients were usually brothers and sons). So Sylvia Panetta, wife of Chief of Staff Leon, served as an administrator for Clinton's anti-crime Ounce of Prevention Council. Brooke Shearer, wife of Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, ran the White House Fellows Program. (Her brother was named ambassador to Finland.) Heidi Schulman, wife of U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor, consulted for the U.S. Information Agency. And Harriet Babbitt, wife of Interior Secretary Bruce, served as ambassador to the Organization of American States. Hillary Clinton's role in the health care task force was viewed by many as an outrage, but, in a lower-profile way, similar things were happening throughout the administration.

George W. Bush has been worse. If Clinton rewarded one sympathetic Supreme Court justice with family jobs, W. has rewarded two, nominating Janet Rehnquist to be inspector general of Health and Human Services and Eugene Scalia as Labor Department solicitor. Michael Powell, son of Colin, was named chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. Office of Management and Budget Director Mitchell E. Daniels's sister Deborah punches in as assistant attorney general, and Mark McClellan, brother of Deputy Press Secretary Scott, reports to the Council of Economic Advisers. On August 17 Philip Perry, husband of vice presidential daughter Elizabeth Cheney Perry, was hired as acting associate attorney general. Last, and almost certainly least, the White House has nominated 28-year-old Strom Thurmond Jr.—just three years out of law school—to be U.S. attorney for South Carolina. (The average age for U.S. attorneys is 50, with 22 years of experience.)

The young Thurmond notwithstanding, the problem with this kind of reciprocal nepotism isn't that the family members in question are all incompetent. It's that, even if they are qualified, the fact that they were hired at least in part as a political favor means they had an unfair advantage. And it also means that if they do a bad job, it's hard to fire them.

So it may have been divine justice when Chad and Cadee discovered that the Condit name would no longer be a boon to their careers. Just before handing in his key to the governor's mansion, Chad lamented to Larry King: "If this is what public service is about, I don't... know that I would want any part of it." Too bad he was only referring to his reason for resigning and not to the circumstances under which he got the job in the first place. ■

Brooklyn Dispatch

Gutted

By Paul Berman

The imminent death of Manhattan, home of the arts, has been announced every few years since about 1910, which might lead you to raise an eyebrow at any new such announcement. But then, if something has been said a thousand times, maybe it's true. In Edmund Wilson's theory, Manhattan expired in the 1920s. The high-rises went up in those years, and the new buildings ruined the nineteenth-century scale and tranquility of the streets, and Manhattan became unbearable to anyone with a sensitive soul. It was a good theory, and if it wasn't entirely correct, that was only because

Paul Berman is the author of *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968.*

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Still Fighting Florida

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and acting director of the Boston University Department of Journalism.

After the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported in June that black voters in Florida had been discriminated against in last fall's presidential election, dissenting commission members asked scholar John R. Lott Jr. to take a look at the commission's numbers. Lott's analysis shows that the majority's selective statistical review had led to a distorted conclusion.

The commission found, for example, "a direct correlation between race and having one's vote discounted as a spoiled ballot." But Lott found that the highest rates of rejected ballots from African Americans came in counties controlled by Democrats with black election supervisors. **Clearly voter error was linked to education, income, and literacy. But the innuendo of wrongdoing dies hard.**

Remember the fuss over "undervotes?" About 2 percent of the ballots recorded no vote for the presidency. Most of the "decisions" made by politically agnostic, racially neutral machines were because voters had failed to follow instructions.

But how would the "stolen election" crowd respond to an outrageous case of ballot disqualification engineered by politically motivated human beings?

Enter the *New York Times* with its July analysis on the treatment of overseas absentee ballots. Here, there were several reasons to count every vote. First, most voters were absent because they were serving their country. Also, a 1986 federal law allows Americans living abroad who fail to receive state absentee ballots to cast a generic federal ballot. For good measure, a 1980s consent decree forced Florida to end a rule disqualifying overseas ballots that do not have an Army Post Office, Fleet Post Office, or overseas postmark.

Nevertheless, an army of Gore lawyers fanned out across Florida determined to block as many of the feared military ballots as possible. In counties won by Mr. Bush, 29 percent of the overseas ballots were disqualified; in those captured by Mr. Gore, the figure was 60 percent. A federal judge later held that hundreds of overseas ballots were improperly thrown out either because they failed to carry an overseas postmark or because officials had no proof voters' using the generic federal ballot had met the deadline for requesting absentee state ballots.

Did the *Times* inveigh against this gross disenfranchisement of U.S. servicepeople and others? No, the newspaper charged instead that, since ballots with the same characteristics had been counted by some Florida counties, Bush's Florida victory had been tainted by "flawed ballots." Thus, counting a vote where the voter had failed to follow instructions is good, but counting what a federal court held were valid votes of military forces is bad.

The enduring effort to discredit Bush's election does little harm to his presidency. Rather, it feeds the already pervasive sense of cynicism about national institutions, the feeling that everything is rigged and nothing is fair. Whereas some seek to restore the temple of trust on which free government must stand, others play penny-ante Sampson and shake that temple to its foundation.

— *Robert Zelnick*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University

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whole neighborhoods in downtown Manhattan never did get taken over by high-rises, and the nineteenth century managed to survive without Wilson having noticed. For the old, civilized proportions of five- and six-story structures have remained intact, more or less, in large stretches of lower Manhattan. And in those streets the arts and culture went on flourishing, right through the twentieth century.

But that was then. In my own theory, death occurred more recently—just now, in fact. It was because of a long-delayed influence of the bohemianism of the 1960s, which had an odd effect on those same nineteenth-century streets. In the '60s a small number of people, having rebelled against bourgeois life, set out to show that a proper home does not have to look like a home and that any location at all can make an excellent place to live, if suitably adapted (for instance, an abandoned garment factory). An old, desolate industrial loft might even be preferable to an ordinary home because the paned windows are impressively large, the rooms are expansive, and cast-iron Doric pillars are magnificent features for any living room, if you take the trouble to scrape off a hundred years of paint and grime. So the bohemian pioneers moved and scraped and thumbed their noses at the ordinary bourgeois who went on living in homes that look like homes. SoHo was born. And a new style in downtown housing came into fashion, which consisted of sleek and elaborate palaces hidden within ancient industrial structures—bourgeois ostentation beneath a façade of anti-bourgeois indifference.

The new style spread a few blocks away into the run-down slums of the industrial proletariat on the Lower East Side and in Chinatown and a few other places. It was discovered that, in the infested interiors of the most rickety of tenements, you could construct plush housing for the sort of person who in previous ages might have rushed to the suburbs—even while retaining the exterior grime, with its mythic aura of class war and immigrant pathos. In that manner, whole districts of lower Manhattan changed their inner character without altering their outside appearance—a sinister development. During the last three or four years, Orchard Street, home of bargains, became the home of millionaires, without ever ceasing to look like Orchard Street. Immigrants from abroad went on adding their exotic daubs of color, just as in the storied past; except that this time the immigrants, too, were rolling in money—wealthy adventurers from Western Europe and Japan instead of the wretched refuse of yore. Bohemian slumming thereby solved the housing crisis of the well-to-do. Now the wealthy zones come in two versions instead of one—a conventional version for conventional people and a shockingly radical version for the shockingly radical. And the housing stock for rich people has doubled.

It has been a boon for tourism. The late, great John Lindsay's Fun City has become much more fun. It's true that, as everyone has noticed, downtown's rise into wealth has driven entire social classes out of the borough. I don't mean to suggest that everyone in the cultural world of Manhattan has lately had to flee. New York has still not abandoned its humane 1940s housing laws, which allow people with leases from long ago to cling to their apartments. So the elderly remain. Then, too, there have always been wealthy artists who can afford anything. And there are the dwellers in university housing.

But no one doubts any longer that, with regard to the arts and culture, Manhattan's future is as a showroom, and most of the people who actually produce what is displayed will have to live somewhere else. Where? That question has already been answered, in a haphazard way. The cultural trades for several decades now have been relocating to Brooklyn's different neighborhoods: Williamsburg and Red Hook for fine artists; the brownstone districts, from Brooklyn Heights to Park Slope (Fort Greene included), for everyone else—the graphic artists, writers, editors, musicians, film people, and so forth. Why those several Brooklyn zones? Because Wilson was right about nineteenth-century architecture, and those neighborhoods, in their antiquity, preserve something of the old Manhattan mix—stimulating and warm—and of street bustle on a human scale.

But is it really possible to move a cultural center, to pack up what has always been New York's mysterious, frenetic vibration and cart it across the river, where different traditions are engraved in the streets and the local mystiques are not the Manhattan mystiques? Maybe. But it cannot help that Brooklyn, too, has undergone in recent decades its own modernizing permutations. For Brooklyn used to be a city in the nineteenth-century style, with a vigorous center stretching like a backbone from the Brooklyn Bridge to Grand Army Plaza, a downtown filled with handsome civic buildings, glamorous shopping streets, austere and spectacular churches, theaters, concert halls, and artfully carved monuments. And, during the last 40 years, large parts of that zone, running from the bridge to the Civil War memorial at Prospect Park, have been plucked away, as if by a chef boning a fish.

Several acres by the bridge were ripped up by philistine developers in the 1960s and replaced with concrete malls and highways. The most glorious of cast-iron buildings on Fulton Street were hidden under seedy façades. Block-long stretches were abandoned to the weeds. The borough's transportation hub, once upon a time a handsome cobblestone plaza, was, during the 1990s, turned over to a single developer, who covered the zone with scary-looking hangars of unspeakable ugliness under the name Atlantic Center. And all of that was described as progress.

Manhattan was disemboweled by surgically removing the interior of buildings for the comfort of the rising classes. But Brooklyn, too, has been disemboweled, mostly by bulldozing its urban center. Manhattan, in its wealth and its disembowelment, has ended up looking rather cheerful. But Brooklyn has ended up as a series of handsome outlying districts surrounding the wreckage of what used to be its center—a devastation on a scale that makes even the most grandiose of the lately announced plans for imaginative Brooklyn arts centers and witty new architecture look pathetically modest.

And why have so many destructive changes overtaken poor old New York, in the boom years of American prosperity? The answer is something frightening to consider. There is an art of urbanism. It is the art of building cities, knowing how to achieve correct proportions, where to put civic centers and cultural life, and how to preserve more than architecture. New York became a great capital because people used to know that art. That was in the old days, though. ■

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Saving the Boy Scouts from its supporters.

Big Tent

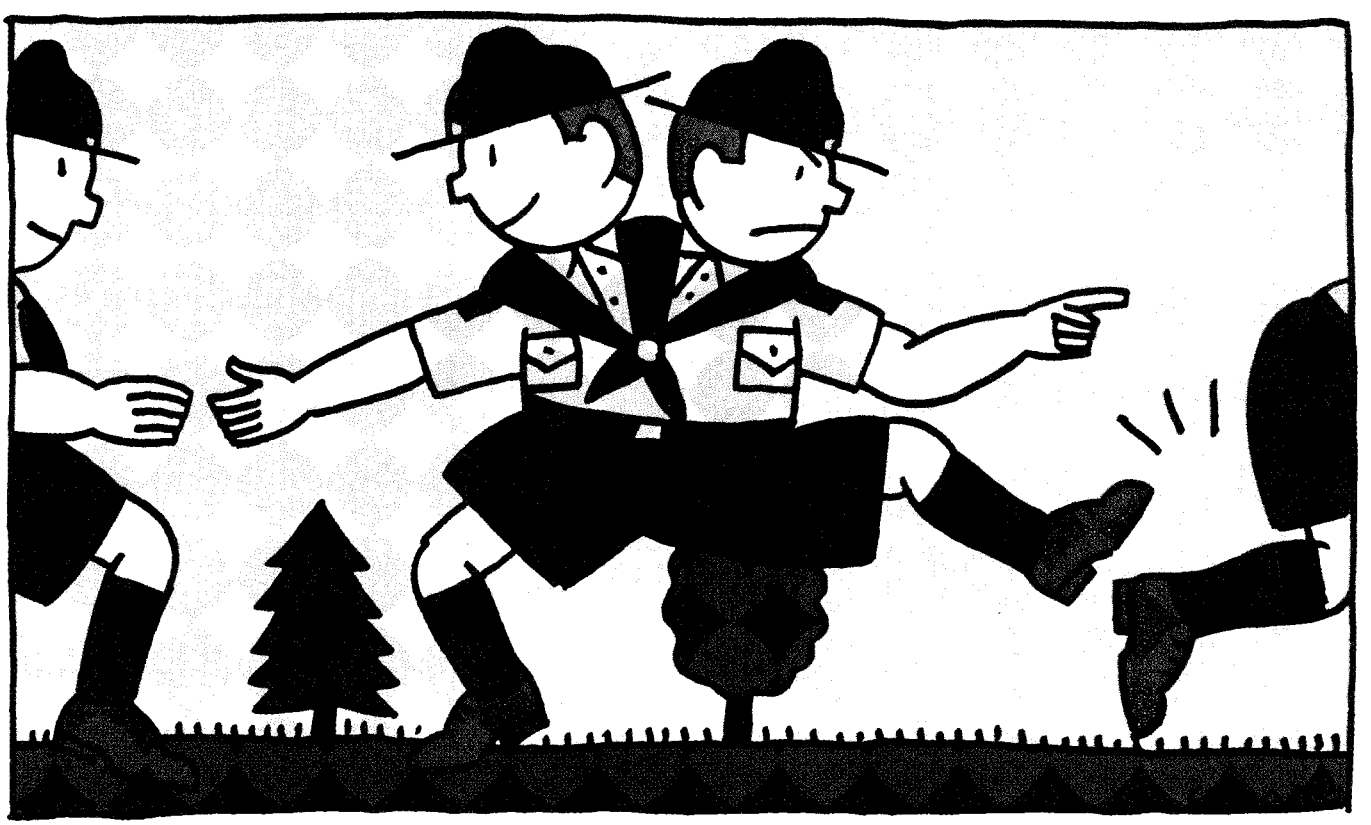
By BENJAMIN SOSKIS

FORT A.P. HILL, VIRGINIA

ON A SUNDAY morning in late July, as a heavy rain pounded the tent flaps, 32,000 Boy Scouts assembled in prayer. In a large open field next to the parking lot, some 10,000 Roman Catholic scouts waded through mud puddles in front of a covered stage, where the Papal Nuncio presided over Communion. Across the "Merit Badge Midway," Methodist scouts gathered next to a massive rappelling course. There was a Buddhist ceremony, attended by hundreds of curious boys, as well as services for Christian Scientists, Quakers, Mormons, and Eastern Orthodox. The day before, Jewish scouts had gathered to read the Book of Lamentations, commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples.

The quadrennial National Jamboree, held at this 76,000-acre Army complex 40 miles north of Richmond, was the first major Boy Scouts of America (BSA) gathering since the Supreme Court last June upheld the organization's right to ban gay scoutmasters. After the decision, liberal groups blasted the organization as exclusionary and narrow-minded. So it was not surprising that the scouts at the Jamboree took particular satisfaction in its demonstration of religious ecumenism. As Doug Marold, a 16-year-old from Dallas, explained, referring to one of the twelve virtues enshrined in Scout Law, "Every kid has to find his own way to reverence." Promotional material also emphasized scout inclusiveness, celebrating those assembled as "a world brotherhood of youth." And President Bush, in videotaped remarks played later that day, underscored the point, declaring that "the values of Scouting . . . are the values of America."

At one time in our nation's history, Bush was probably right. Few other institutions—perhaps baseball, perhaps apple pie—have enjoyed as unchallenged a reputation for undiluted and unruffled Americanism. Every president since William Taft has served as the organization's honorary head, and in its 90-year history more than 100 million boys have donned its uniform. But Bush's claim is no longer true. For last June's Supreme Court decision ratified the Boy Scouts' status as a combatant on one side of the culture war. In June Senator Jesse Helms pushed an amendment through the Senate seeking to protect the BSA's anti-gay stance, provoking a counter-bill from Senator Barbara Boxer. Recently the *New York Times* op-ed page lambasted the organization's



SEYMOUR CHWAST

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Building Blocks

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

It's September and the return of yellow school buses and back-to-school sales reminds us that a record 53 million kids are heading back to the classroom. Of those children, nearly four million will be starting kindergarten this year. The good news is that almost all of them are eager to learn, well-behaved, and healthy. And according to a major study on early childhood by the National Center for Education Statistics, most have the basic skills and knowledge they need to begin to read and count and discover more about their world.

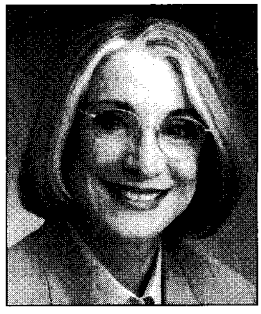
But there is also some bad news. A small but significant percentage of our youngest children, primarily kids from low-income families, are in poor health and lack the pre-literacy, pre-math, and social skills that more advantaged youngsters have when they start kindergarten. Most of these children are perfectly capable of acquiring those skills, but they just haven't been exposed to the kinds of experiences and informal learning opportunities that produce them.

Without those early learning opportunities, it's hard for disadvantaged children to catch up with their more affluent peers. In fact, the study found that, while the children who had been behind at the beginning of the school year made great strides and had closed the learning gap in basic skills by year's end, the more advantaged youngsters continued to have an edge, especially in higher order skills. In short, despite the terrific job their teachers did, they were unable to compensate for what many poor youngsters, because of their poverty, could not get outside of school.

Outside influences

It is clear that a critical part of closing this achievement gap is to get it right from the start. That's why we not only need full-day kindergarten available to all children, but also a national commitment to make high-quality, preschool education, starting at the age of three, universally available—not compulsory, but accessible and affordable to all—with first priority given to needy children.

A few communities are now doing this, but we need a national effort. We already have a foundation on which to base such a system of early childhood education: Head Start, the early learning program for disadvantaged children. It will be up for reauthorization soon. We must fully fund it so it not only covers all eligible children, but also provides them with a high-quality program and includes the health and social services and parent involvement components now present in Head Start. Evaluations tell us those features



High-quality early learning opportunities can help close the achievement gap.

are as important to children's success as getting them academically prepared.

But we also need to expand beyond Head Start—to create a universal program of quality early childhood learning and care. There is hardly a working family in America, whether poor or middle-class, that hasn't experienced the anxiety of finding quality preschool and care for its children, and hasn't been forced to leave them with relatives or even strangers, while wondering whether videos will be the children's primary fare for the day. And families lucky enough to find a good preschool may have to defer saving for their children's college education because of soaring preschool costs.

Share the costs

We can establish a successful universal early childhood education program through cost-sharing. By that I mean first, let's leverage federal, state, and local funds to establish the quality system we need and make it a priority to pay the costs for poor families who want to enroll their children in preschool. Second, let's ask other families who want their children in quality preschools and can afford to pay some, or all, of the costs to do so according to a reasonable schedule of sliding-scale fees.

This would make building and running a preschool system eminently affordable. It would give poor children the access to high-quality early childhood education that they are now largely denied—putting them on equal footing with other children in those critical early years, rather than starting behind and having to play catch-up their entire lives. And working and middle-class families would get a higher-quality early childhood arrangement at less cost, something they desperately want.

Quality preschool will pay for itself in the long run, not only through increased student achievement and greater parent satisfaction, but in lower dropout and delinquency rates and greater economic productivity. Answering this common need that America's families have would enable children of all backgrounds to learn together right from the start, and give real meaning to family and civic values. What, after all, could be more important to realizing the promise of this great democracy? ▮

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"message of bigotry," while *The Washington Times* defended its "principles of rectitude" from "well-funded radical homosexuals."

With its decision, the Court validated the BSA's claim that it had always been a distinctively conservative group, "a private expressive association" with its "own moral code," one that "espouses family values" and considers its right to exclude certain members as important as its right to include others. But, in so doing, it also supported a distortion of scouting history. For despite the BSA's conservative defenders' claim that they are upholding scouting tradition, the organization's real tradition bears no more resemblance to contemporary Christian-right ideology than it does to contemporary liberal ideology. In fact, from its earliest days, in an effort to create good citizens and good men from a diverse pool of boys, the Boy Scouts sidestepped precisely this kind of partisan tug-of-war with a genuinely pluralistic ideal. In the past, when the group invoked "traditional American values," it meant an authentic national consensus, not a particular ideological predisposition. If conservatives now want the BSA to embody that ideological predisposition, they should be honest enough to admit what they are doing: not preserving scouting as it always was but recreating it as something new.

THE BOY SCOUTS of America was first incorporated in 1910, and in its early years tried to pitch as wide a tent as possible. To some extent, this inclusiveness stemmed from the need to expand its membership base in order to win exclusive rights to the Boy Scouts name (the Hearst newspaper chain was planning a rival organization at the same time). But financial imperatives dovetailed nicely with ideological ones: The BSA's founders were concerned by a perceived crisis of youth caused in part by a burgeoning immigrant population, urban poverty, and the broader moral perils of modernity. One BSA elder complained that the nation was suffering from "City rot" and described American adolescents as "a lot of flat-chested cigarette smokers, with shaky nerves and a doubtful vitality." Scouting would train these youths—in the words of the national charter granted to the BSA by Congress in 1916—in the "patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues" necessary for an enlightened citizenry. To become a truly national institution—as well as one dedicated to a nationalistic ideal—the BSA appreciated that it needed a representative membership.

In that vein, the organization emphasized uniformity, middle-class values, and diversified outreach. Foreign-language troops were discouraged; a Committee on Americanization edited Scout Law to remove references to class conflict inherited from its British antecedent; and in 1919 the BSA's Fifth Avenue office hired a field director to establish troops in the underrepresented South and West. And though in the 1920s the BSA leadership tilted rightward (in 1919 the BSA's executive secretary suggested that scout-training might prevent Bolshevism), headquarters forbade any explicit political involvement and settled for an aggressive, ethnically neutral American chauvinism.

If today the BSA seems mired in a controversy over religious principle, in its earlier years the organization avoided any such denominational strife. Scouting in France, where Catholics, Protestants, and secularists had split into their own programs, was a sound warning of the alternative. And so, though the BSA was initially linked closely to the Protestant YMCA, it espoused a strict ecumenism based on a vaguely articulated but potent American deism. The BSA's commitment to religious pluralism was clearly spelled out in its 1917 "Declaration of Religious Principle": "The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no boy can grow into the best kind of citizenship without recognizing his obligation to God.... The Boy Scouts of America, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of a boy, but it is absolutely non-sectarian in its attitude toward that training."

In fact, at first the BSA's efforts to transcend religious and ethnic particularism scared off some conservative denominations, such as Lutherans, Catholics, and Mormons, according David Macleod's *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boys Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners.* But assimilationist pressures soon won these groups over, and by 1921 Catholics boasted the third-most troops of any denomination. For the Mormons, participation in the Boy Scouts became a way to convince suspicious mainline denominations of their Americanism. (By 1913 Scouting had become the official youth program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.) The BSA, writes Macleod, favored a "'civil religion'—not as a prophetic faith standing in judgment upon actual American practices but as a celebration of the American way of life." With its good works on the home front during both world wars (during World War I, scouts sold more than $350 million in war bonds and distributed some 20 million government flyers), the Boy Scouts became one of the chief symbols of American patriotism; by 1955 the group could claim nearly 4.2 million members. And if the nation's living rooms had continued to look like those on the covers of *The Saturday Evening Post*, membership probably would have climbed steadily and with little contest.

THAT WAS NOT to be. The Boy Scouts as we currently know it, as an actively conservative body, emerged from the 1960s, a decade that challenged its institutional essence: its code of discipline, proud conformity, and devotion to country. Suddenly, it was no longer hip to wear the khaki uniform. In desperation, the Cub Scouts removed the pledge "To be Square" from its Promise, while the Boy Scouts wondered aloud, in the words of a 1968 survey it commissioned, "Is Scouting In Tune with the Times?" Concerned that the answer might be no, in 1972 the BSA revised its official *Handbook*. Sections on canoeing and rope-lashing were replaced with passages on urban hiking, drug abuse, and public speaking, and the organization made a concerted effort to recruit more minorities. But these efforts at relevance did little to correct stagnating membership, which declined for the first time in 1969 and plummeted in the early '70s; the Boy Scouts lost nearly one-third of its participants between 1973 and 1980. So the national leadership reverted to the old formula, issuing another *Handbook* revision in 1979 that returned the emphasis to camping skills

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and outdoor activities.

But as the organization rededicated itself to whittling and knot-tying, it also began to orient itself in the contemporary political landscape and to assert itself as a combatant in the culture war. Previously, the Boy Scouts had maintained a decorous silence about sexuality; according to the 1972 *Scoutmaster's Handbook*, scoutmasters should "not undertake to instruct Scouts, in any formalized manner, in the subject of sex and family life.... [I]t is not construed to be Scouting's proper area." Some of this was the residual prudishness of the organization's Edwardian founders. But the Boy Scouts also did not want to isolate the more conservative religious denominations that sponsored troops, who (ironically, given their current insistence that the BSA explicitly endorse certain sexual norms) worried that any official BSA position on sexuality would impinge on their own efforts at moral education. So, as with religion and politics, except for a few perfunctory references, the BSA was happy to leave the topic of sex to a boy's parents or clergyman.

To be sure, this official silence frequently cloaked unofficial discrimination. As the BSA pointed out almost giddily in its Supreme Court brief, until 1979 homosexual sodomy was a criminal offense in New Jersey, the state whose 1991 anti-discrimination laws formed the basis for gay Assistant Scoutmaster James Dale's Supreme Court challenge. Moreover, since its founding, the BSA was plagued by fears that scout leaders might molest their young charges, and avowed homosexuals were considered the most likely to do so. As James Tarr, the chief scout executive in the late '70s, recently recounted to *Rolling Stone*, "If you had a person you knew was a homosexual, you would confront them, and they would resign quietly."

BUT PRECISELY BECAUSE such homophobia was informal, other troops were free to interpret the Scouts' principles as consistent with a progressive worldview. Looking back on his days as a scout in New Jersey in the '40s and as a professional district executive for the BSA in Long Island in the '50s, David Napp, a retired Connecticut book salesman, acknowledges that some of his co-workers were probably gay. But "the issue never really came up in all the years I was in scouting as a boy or as a leader." In 1993, after the Boy Scouts discovered that Napp himself was homosexual—he claims he was not yet publicly out of the closet—he was dismissed from the organization. Napp now views his early years in scouting nostalgically: "[E]ven in the '30s, [the BSA] was really open to all boys.... We had boys who were fat, boys who were clods, boys who were nerds, we had black kids." Mike Montalvo, a scout in the late '60s in Dallas, concurs, recalling that in his troop it was generally known that one of his scoutmasters' sons, also in the troop, was gay. "It was something that was known, but it wasn't talked about."

But amid the cultural conflict of the '70s, such silence became untenable. The gay rights movement began to demand a response to the discrimination that the Boy Scouts tacitly allowed, and several high-profile cases of child abuse by scout leaders inflamed the national leadership's homophobia. (Especially devastating was the 1977 trial of a group of New Orleans scout leaders who formed a troop to serve as a pedophiliac sex ring.) And so, in 1978, the national organization offered its first official, if barely publicized, disavowal of homosexuality: The president and chief Scout executive notified the organization's executive committee that the BSA does "not believe that homosexuality and leadership in Scouting are appropriate." The following year, for the first time, the BSA insinuated sexual politics into the 1979 *Handbook*. Whereas the *Handbook* had previously associated "morally straight" (a phrase from the Scout Oath) with respect for others, it now invoked heterosexuality: "When you live up to the trust of fatherhood your sex life will fit into God's wonderful plan of creation."

That same year brought another symbolic affirmation of this realignment: After a quarter-century in New Brunswick, New Jersey, the BSA moved its headquarters to Irving, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. Ostensibly, the BSA moved for lower rents and the convenient location near a major airport, but many saw it as part of a larger demographic and cultural redefinition. During the group's membership skid in the '70s—which was most pronounced in the Northeast—enrollment remained steady only in the Rocky Mountain region, where numbers were buoyed by the steady participation of 250,000 Mormons, whose percentage in the organization quadrupled from 1920 to 1980, to nearly 20 percent.

It was as if the BSA had decided that the terrain it had previously staked out—that broad national consensus—was suddenly uninhabitable and chose to decamp to the narrower territory of the traditionalists instead. So, even in 1986, when the Boy Scouts, citing a study of convicted child molesters, admitted that avowed homosexuals were no more dangerous than heterosexuals, they still rejected gays, pointing to the threat they posed to the traditional family. By 1991 the BSA had retreated so far from its big-tent roots that, when a California appellate court struck down the complaint of a gay Berkeley Eagle Scout who was rejected as a scoutmaster, Scouting officials could explain, "We are a private organization aimed at traditional families." A few months later, the BSA's national spokesman elaborated: "We're not saying that Scouting values are for every person in society to live by." That same year those traditional values were further clarified when, with a bit of exegetical legerdemain, the BSA declared that homosexuality not only conflicted with the Scout Oath's injunction to be "morally straight" but also with the ideal of "cleanliness" featured in the Scout Law.

THESE EXPLICIT POLICIES have made the Boy Scouts a safe haven for the conservative, centralized denominations that were once wary of it. The Church of Latter-day Saints now sponsors more troops than any other single institution. In fact, religious bodies now sponsor 65 percent of all troops, compared with just over 40 percent 15 years ago. And, according to some observers of the BSA's bureaucracy, the real clout within the organization now lies not with the national executive board, made up mostly of corporate executives, but with the relationships committee, which comprises representatives from all the major sponsoring institutions and which is dominated by religious groups. As Chuck Wolfe, a former

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member of the national executive board, told *The Advocate* magazine last year, "The real driving force is the relationships committee.... That's where the money comes from."

And, indeed, a significant part of that money comes from the Mormons. This grants the Church of Latter-day Saints substantial leverage with the national leadership. As one scout leader told *Newsweek* this year, "There is an unadulterated fear that [the Mormons are] going to bail out, that they're going to start their own program." The Mormons have invoked their power in the current controversy, threatening to withdraw their 412,000 boys if gay scout leaders are allowed to participate. "[T]he Scouting Movement as now constituted will cease to exist," Von G. Keetch, attorney for the Church of Latter-day Saints, threatened in an amicus brief to the Supreme Court last year, suggesting that other conservative religious denominations might follow the Mormons' lead.

LIBERAL GROUPS WITHIN the Boy Scouts have countered the BSA's increasing identification with the religious right by invoking the organization's ecumenical past. As University of California at Davis Professor Jay Mechling writes in the soon-to-be-published *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth*, "To maintain the position that homosexuality is immoral amounts to preferring some religions over others on this matter." The BSA "is acting like a church and is departing from the founders' principles." In fact, in an amicus brief submitted to the Supreme Court, a number of more liberal denominations (including the United Methodist Church, Reform Judaism, and the Episcopal Diocese of Newark) pointed out that they—along with governmental sponsors—represent nearly 60 percent of all troops. "Contrary to [the BSA's] assertions ... our boys and young men do not participate in the Boy Scouts for the purpose of expressing the view that gay boys and men are immoral," they wrote. "It is *our* boys and young men that the BSA seeks to exclude from *our* Scout troops." This January the Union of American Hebrew Congregations—Reform Judaism's governing body—called on its congregants to withdraw their children from Boy Scout troops, stating that the BSA's position is "incompatible with our consistent belief that every individual—regardless of his or her sexual orientation—is created in the image of God."

But perhaps no religious group has challenged the Boy Scouts' fundamentalism as vigorously as the Unitarian Universalists, a progressive Protestant denomination with some 217,000 members in North America. In 1992, in protest over the BSA's position on homosexuality, the Unitarians withdrew as an official sponsor, though individual churches still maintained troops. Then, in 1998, the BSA refused to rubber-stamp the "Religion in Life Award," the Unitarians' version of the decoration given to scouts by their sponsoring church based on the fulfillment of certain religious obligations. Historically the Boy Scouts have deferred to the religious institutions in the creation and conferring of the award. But, in this case, they objected to the inclusion, in the award's instruction manual, of material spelling out the Unitarians' "ongoing concern regarding the homophobic and discriminatory attitudes of the [BSA's] national leadership." A BSA spokesman claimed that the language "was just not consistent with Scouting's values, particularly regarding the commitment to duty to God and traditional family values." The president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Reverend John Buehrens (who was himself a "Life Scout"), disagrees. He believes the BSA simply "knuckled under to political pressure by those who pay the bills." Many Unitarian leaders, however, believing that scouting was worth saving, handed out the award anyway, without authorization.

WHICH BEGS THE question: Is scouting worth the fight? The answer is yes. For, even in its tarnished state, the Boy Scouts does bring together boys from diverse economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, providing, in Robert Putnam's terms, "bridging social capital." Just witness the Jamboree, where scouts from Massachusetts and scouts from Utah fished, traded badges, and worked and prayed together.

Until society, and the Boy Scouts with it, comes to a consensus about the equality of gays and lesbians, liberals should work to decentralize the BSA—allowing different troops to define their own moral and sexual rules, as they effectively did for most of the organization's history. As Jay Mechling writes, "[T]he Boys Scouts of America—that is, the legal corporation and the bureaucrats working in the office buildings of the national office and the council offices—is not the 'real' Boy Scouts in the sense that a boy experiences Scouting through a concrete folk group of men and boys." Conservatives might be hard-pressed to oppose this sort of local-control argument. Certainly, it made its appearance at the Jamboree, where several scouts expressed displeasure that headquarters was intruding on their troops' territory. "People think we're homophobic, but we have no power over that. It's all the head council," explained 14-year-old Joe Paul, a red-haired, freckled scout from Travis City, Michigan.

And decentralization is catching on among some scouting officials as well. This June representatives from nine of the largest metropolitan Boy Scout councils—Boston, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Orange County—proposed leaving membership policies to the local sponsoring institutions. Says Mike Harrison, former chairman of the Orange County Council, "To me, one of the strengths of the organization is that it has always been able to accommodate differing viewpoints, and the present position is totally inconsistent with that. We want to get the tribe back on track."

Of course, remaining in the Boy Scouts would require liberals to tolerate a degree of moral discomfort. It would also require faith in the nation's moral progress: that the BSA will, over time, come to see nondiscrimination as the principle that best honors scouting's heritage. And it would require a belief that the Boy Scouts, by joining together children of different backgrounds in "a brotherhood of youth," can help achieve that progress. Should that time come, liberals, by refusing to abandon the organization even when it seems to have abandoned them, will—in the best tradition of the Scouts—be prepared. ■

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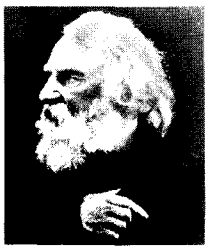

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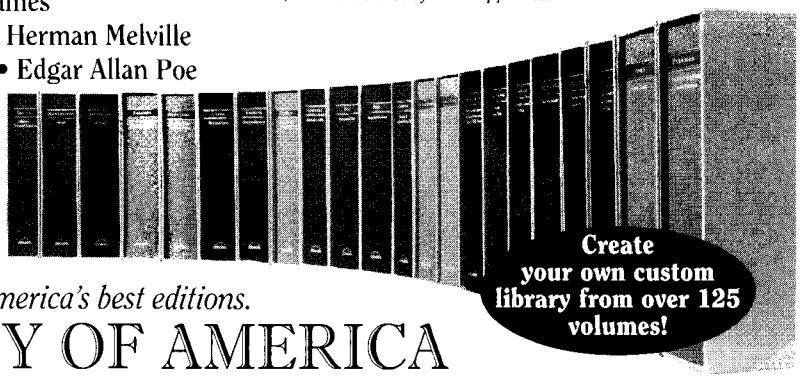

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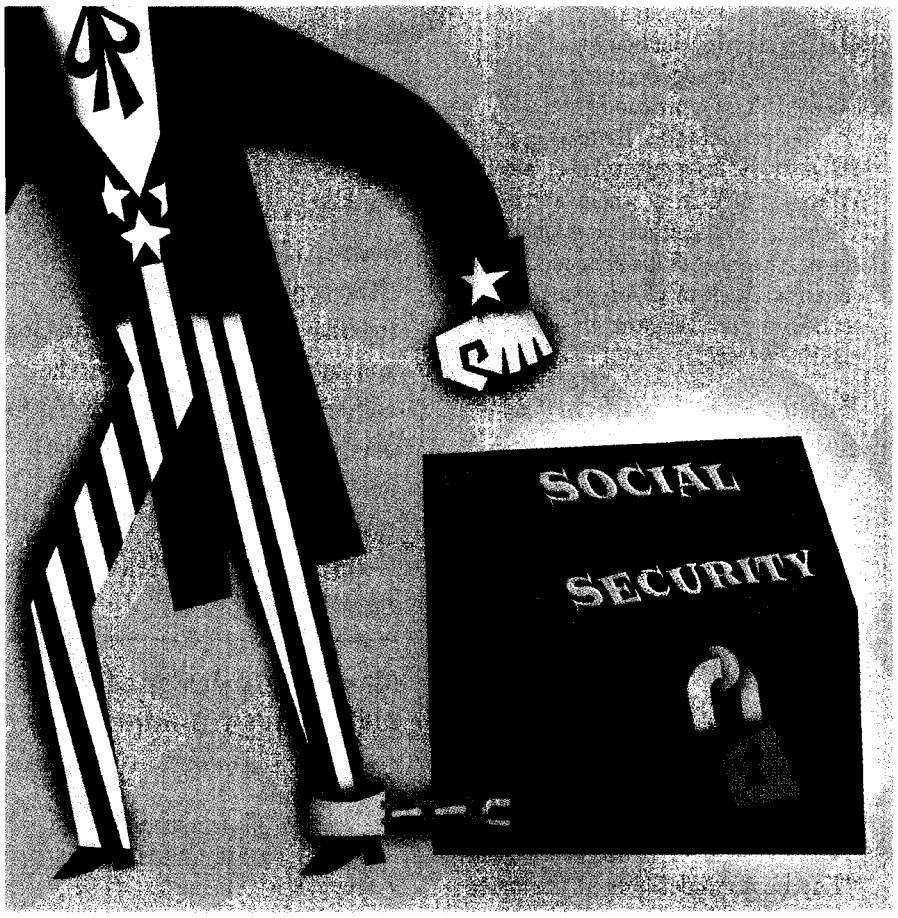
Spend the Social Security surplus.

Out of the Box

By ROBERT B. REICH



LAST WEEK THE Congressional Budget Office confirmed what every semiconscious observer of the budget process had known for months: that proposed spending by President Bush and Congress would force the government to take $9 billion from the ostensibly sacrosanct Social Security surplus. And over the following three years, CBO projected, the government would swipe another $21 billion—assuming, optimistically, that the president and Congress didn't spend even more money.

In reality, these are piddling amounts. The federal budget will be nearly $2 trillion this year, meaning that a few billion here or there are hardly worth a second thought. But you wouldn't know it from listening to leading Democrats. Virtually without dissent, party leaders have announced that they are prepared to protect every single penny in the Social Security surplus, even if it means slashing the programs they consider most important. "You can go down the whole list—education, health care," House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt said recently on NBC's "Meet the Press." And just this Sunday on ABC's "This Week," Kent Conrad, Democratic chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, reiterated his party's commitment to preserving the entire Social Security surplus no matter what. "I don't think it is wise to have additional spending that's not paid for in this environment," said Conrad, "because it would have to come right out of the Social Security trust fund."

What's going on here? Once upon a time, when consumers and corporations tightened their belts as they are doing now, Democrats would call for the government to fill in the gap and spend more than it was taking in. And, even in good times, Democrats used to champion long-term investments in America's productive future, even if it meant modest deficits. Today, by contrast, Democrats are demanding a balanced budget and spending cuts in the face of a potential recession. Goodbye, John Maynard Keynes. Hello, Herbert Hoover. Tom Daschle and Dick Gephardt may think it's good politics to paint Bush as an irresponsible manager of the federal budget. But it's actually the Democrats who are being irresponsible—by abandoning their traditional commitment to fiscal stimulus and government spending and, in the process, mortgaging our economic future.

The origins of the Democratic love affair with fiscal austerity date back to late 1997, when the Clinton White House faced a budget surplus growing faster than anyone had predicted. Republicans were talking about enacting a large tax cut. The White House needed a way to head them off.

President Clinton's economic advisers (not including me—I had already left the administration) recommended that he link the surplus to the future of Social Security. Under their

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proposed strategy, Clinton would declare the entire budget surplus—which was, in fact, a surplus in Social Security coupled with a small deficit in the rest of the budget—off-limits until the White House and Congress agreed on how to preserve Social Security for the coming decades, when millions of baby-boomers would retire and claim their benefit checks. Clinton's advisers figured this would trump the GOP's call for tax cuts: If the public viewed the Republican tax cut proposal as a possible threat to Social Security, they'd oppose it. And many Clinton advisers favored the plan on economic grounds as well: They believed that reducing government debt was the surest way to keep the nation's economy strong—which would, among other things, make it easier to pay future Social Security benefits.

Clinton ultimately agreed to the strategy largely because he couldn't think of a better way to block Republican tax cutters. But there was, in fact, another way to head off the GOP: Clinton could have announced that many of the things he had promised when he first ran for president were now affordable. He could have talked up universal preschool care, expanding health care, tens of billions of dollars in new spending for public education, or mass transit that would alleviate the pressure on the nation's choking suburban highways. He could have returned to the vast, unfinished agenda he put on hold during his first term while he got the nation's "fiscal house" in order. And in so doing, he probably could have painted a picture far more compelling than the Republican tax cut, which, polls showed even then, wasn't all that popular.

Admittedly, this would have meant using payroll taxes to finance other government spending. But barely anyone would have noticed. For years, the government had routinely used the revenues from Social Security payroll taxes to finance everything it did. Not even during the long, harrowing negotiations with Republicans over balancing the budget, starting in the spring of 1995 (long before anyone knew the surpluses would surge and make budget-balancing easy), did anyone on either side think there was a meaningful difference between the revenues rolling into the Treasury from payroll taxes and those rolling in from other sources.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO know whether Clinton's personal embarrassments figured into his calculation. He began urging Republicans and Democrats to "save Social Security first" in his 1998 State of the Union address. The story about his liaison with Monica Lewinsky had broken just weeks before, and he had already been forced to publicly deny that he had ever had sex with "that woman." Some aides wanted him to delay the State of the Union, but he forged ahead, giving perhaps the best speech of his entire presidency—a jocular, confident, bravura performance—perfectly and resolutely "compartmentalizing" the scandal, as the pundits would report.

Notably, Clinton didn't call for reserving the Social Security surplus for Social Security per se. He merely said that, before spending "every penny of any surplus" on something else, Congress and the administration should come up with a plan for maintaining the solvency of Social Security. After the State of the Union, in order to keep the pressure on Republicans and ward off a tax cut, the White House held a series of debates throughout the country about what that plan might be. Not surprisingly, those debates were drowned out by the Lewinsky media circus.

But even as Clinton's bid for a long-term Social Security deal went nowhere, the budget surplus kept swelling. By mid-1999, the surplus had grown so quickly that even the portion of the budget *not* dedicated to Social Security was in the black. And this changed the GOP's strategy. With the non-Social Security part of the budget also in surplus (a surplus expected to continue growing), the Republicans could agree to put Social Security in a "lockbox" and still have enough money for their precious tax cut. Clinton responded by going even further; he proposed that 62 percent of the total projected surplus—*more* than just Social Security revenues—be devoted to Social Security. That proposal went nowhere, but it hardly mattered. The lockbox had become a political reality.

Soon both parties were swearing up and down that they would never touch Social Security money. And in the 2000 presidential campaign each candidate vowed to respect the lockbox. Picking up where Clinton left off, Al Gore promised to leave the Social Security surplus alone and proposed dedicating a large portion of the non-Social Security surplus to reducing the national debt, so that the entire debt would be paid off by 2013. George W. Bush vowed solemnly that he wouldn't touch Social Security either—though he insisted he would have enough money left over to finance a whopping tax cut, a missile defense system, education funding increases, and his plan to privatize Social Security.

FAST-FORWARD ONE year, and Bush has changed his tune. His promise that he could afford his tax cut and his new spending proposals without touching the Social Security surplus has been exposed as a lie. Of course, no one likes to reward lying. But, in fact, Bush's lie is beside the point. The Social Security surplus is an accounting fiction. And by defending it tooth and nail, the Democrats are abandoning their historic commitment to government spending and fiscal stimulus. The result will likely be the worst of both worlds: a huge tax cut *and* smaller government. The Republicans will have gotten exactly what they wanted—at the country's expense. And the Democrats? Well, they'll have their nice little lockbox.

Defenders of the lockbox say that, in protecting the Social Security surplus, the Democrats are trying to head off what could be a terrible long-term problem. According to the projections of the Social Security actuary, by about 2016 the yearly revenues from payroll taxes won't be enough to pay promised benefits; and by about 2038 the trust fund as a whole will have only enough money to pay 75 percent of what was promised. The government would then have to find the money somewhere else—either by going deeper into debt or by raising taxes.

But what pro-lockbox Democrats never acknowledge is that these actuarial projections, while worrisome, are just that: actuarial projections. Behind them lie many assumptions about how fast the economy will grow in the interim, how many people will have jobs and be contributing to Social

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Security, and how many people will be withdrawing money and for how long. Long-term economic projections are notoriously inaccurate, often by wide margins. Not even short-term projections are worth much. Throughout the '90s, year after year, CBO consistently overestimated pending deficits and underestimated pending surpluses. The truth is that it's next to impossible to predict decades in advance the trajectories of revenues going into Social Security and payments coming out of it when they're both influenced by so many factors. The Social Security actuary has never come *close* to predicting the actual state of Social Security, even a single decade out.

Under the actuary's current assumptions, the U.S. economy will grow at an annual rate of only 1.6 percent in the long term. With the economy now growing barely at all, 1.6 percent may seem optimistic, but in fact it's quite low. The effects of technology and population growth are sure to expand America's productive capacity way beyond 3 percent per year, and, even if the nation falls short of its capacity from time to time (as it is doing now), the long-term average is almost certain to be above 2 percent. (The average for the last 30 years was about 3.1 percent per year, and that was largely before computer and information technology became widespread.) Technological advances continue to improve productivity in ways difficult to measure (no one knows how to account for the growth in the computing power of all sorts of gadgets, for example). And the workforce is sure to grow faster than the 0.2 percent per year that the Social Security actuary predicts for the long term. The actuary's model also figures that only one million immigrants will come to these shores annually—about 600,000 legally and 300,000 illegally. That illegal-immigration figure is way below most demographers' estimates. And that matters because most illegal immigrants enter the workforce, and many pay into Social Security through wages that their employers withhold.

Raise any one of these unrealistically low assumptions, and the projected date of Social Security's insolvency is pushed back many years. For example, if average yearly growth is one percentage point higher over the projected period—leading to a growth rate of 2.6 percent instead of 1.6 percent in the long term—Social Security remains solvent many years past 2038, the date at which Social Security is now predicted to be insolvent. In suggesting that the figures are unrealistically low, I don't mean to criticize the chief actuary personally. He does his best to meet an impossible demand for near certitude about a set of conditions decades hence that can't possibly be known and have taken on more political weight than such projections were ever intended to support. One way he responds is by using very conservative assumptions so the nation is more likely to be pleasantly, rather than unpleasantly, surprised. But that doesn't change the fact that, in the end, his projections are little more than educated guesses.

THIS ISN'T TO say we should throw a party and forget about the baby-boomers' Social Security. Other things being equal, it would be preferable for Social Security to eat up less public debt in future years, leaving more money for both private and public investment. It's just that there's so much uncertainty about when and if the "crisis" will hit that politicians shouldn't be scaring the public into thinking that taking several billion dollars out of the Social Security surplus right now will make much difference one way or another. And it's the height of demagoguery for Democrats to accuse Bush of "raiding" Social Security by dipping into the current Social Security surplus, since Democrats did the very same thing for years—back in the early '90s—without a second thought.

A serious approach to reforming Social Security would involve reforms like raising the retirement age to 70 (which seems only sensible, given that we're living longer) and making the benefit formula more progressive so wealthy retirees don't end up collecting such fat Social Security checks every month. But keeping sacrosanct a fictional account called the yearly Social Security surplus is the silliest way imaginable. Not only does it require balancing the rest of the budget even when deficit spending is needed to keep the economy moving, but it also prevents the government from borrowing money to spend on all sorts of other useful objectives—including objectives that might fuel economic growth and help save Social Security. As Clinton noted at the start of his presidency (but later forgot), it's better for the government to borrow money to enlarge the nation's productive capacity—investing in better schools, more affordable and higher-quality preschool care, better health care for young people, mass transit, and so forth—than for the nation to do without these things. A rational family or business would surely borrow to make these kind of investments.

Make no mistake: I'm not saying that Bush's $1.3 trillion tax cut was wise. Although this year's and next year's tax cuts may help fight the economic slowdown, most of the cuts will go into effect years from now and will thus do little to stave off a potential recession. What's more, even in the short term, the tax cut's extreme regressivity—which will widen the gulf between rich and poor—also undermines its anti-recessionary effects. Rich people are unlikely to spend additional dollars because they already spend all they want; poorer people will spend the additional dollars because they don't. But, under Bush's plan, the poor get barely anything.

So, yes, Democrats should be hollering. But right now they are hollering about the wrong thing. By pledging not to touch the Social Security surplus and by criticizing Bush for doing so, Democrats are putting themselves in a fiscal straitjacket that has nothing to do with the real issues facing the country. They'd be wise to open the lockbox and throw away the key. ■

DAVID COWLES

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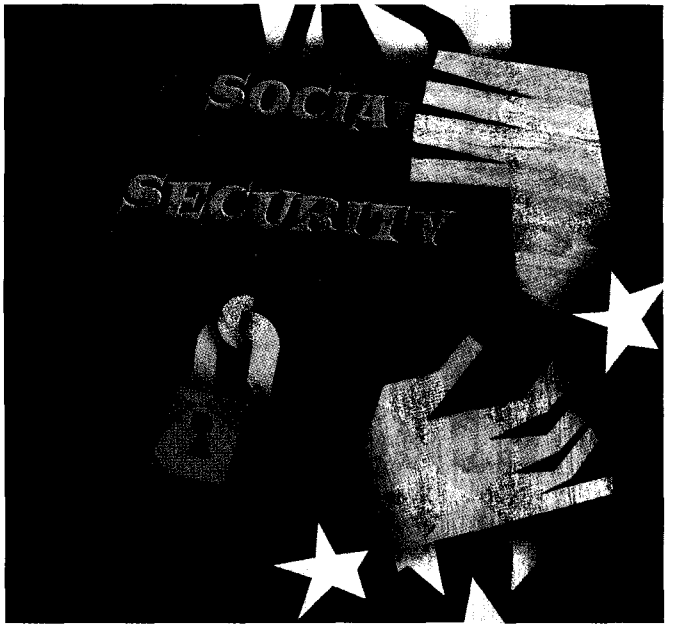
Save the Social Security surplus.

Box Populi

By JONATHAN CHAIT



WHO BLEW THE budget surplus? This is a delicate question for the Bush administration, which has prepared several answers. The first is to deny that any such thing has occurred. Bush, according to a current GOP-sponsored TV commercial, has "protected every penny of Medicare and Social Security and still left the second biggest surplus in history."

This is a rather counterintuitive claim, given that the Congressional Budget Office last week estimated that President Bush's budget will dip into the Social Security surplus and that even the administration's in-house Office of Management and Budget analysis says he'll use virtually all of the Medicare surplus. So the Republican National Committee has supplied some documentation to support the assertion. The RNC fact sheet points out that the government posted a small surplus during the month of July. This is perfectly true; but, since month-to-month surpluses vary wildly, it's wholly irrelevant. The RNC also quotes from Bush's budget report and from a *New York Times* article that quotes Bush saying the same thing. That's it. In other words, the RNC's proof that Bush has protected the Social Security and Medicare surpluses is that—contrary to all independent evidence—he says so.

Bush's second, contradictory explanation is that, yes, the surplus is gone, but it's the fault of big-spending Democrats. "The surplus this year is $34.5 billion smaller than it should be," argued White House spokesman Ari Fleischer last month, "because Congress last year busted the budget." The operative words here are *last year*. The spending increase Fleischer described took place under a previous Congress, and the Bushies knew about it before taking office. It's true that the surplus would be bigger if not for last year's spending boost. It would also be bigger if not for the Vietnam War. Neither event has anything to do with the drop in the surplus under Bush's watch.

Perhaps recognizing the inadequacy of these first two arguments—Nobody Blew the Surplus, Congress Blew the Surplus—the White House has fallen back on a third: The Surplus Doesn't Matter. OMB Director Mitchell E. Daniels has dismissed the "lockbox" that was supposed to protect the Social Security and Medicare surpluses as a "symbolic goal." With this last explanation, the White House has finally won a measure of respect. In fact, the anti-lockbox line has penetrated beyond the usual "amen" corner of conservative pundits to take in intellectuals associated with the progressive wing of the Democratic Party (see Robert B. Reich, "Out of the Box," page 24) and normally hostile outposts of high-minded moderation (such as the *Washington Post* editorial page). Suddenly, the several-years-old bipartisan consensus to save the Medicare and Social Security surpluses is coming unglued. The stakes go far beyond which party gets blamed for losing the surplus. The debate will determine whether the government pursues a sound fiscal policy that prepares us for the retirement of the baby-boomers or puts us in a fiscal hole from which we will struggle to emerge, perhaps for decades.

The lockbox idea dates back to President Clinton's 1998 State of the Union address, in which he proposed cordoning off the emerging budget surplus until the two parties found a way to solve Social Security's long-term financial shortfall. The logic was eminently reasonable. Given that Social Security and Medicare account for nearly half of the federal budget, and we didn't know how much it would cost to shore them up, it didn't make sense to fritter away the government's surplus cash. (Contrary to Reich, even if the economy does fare better in the coming years than government actuaries currently predict, that won't solve Social Security's financial troubles. Benefits are tied to wages, so faster growth means higher wages and hence higher benefit costs.)

Clinton thus stymied the congressional Republicans, who, of course, wanted to devote the surplus to a tax cut. But Clinton's line in the sand was gradually undermined as the budget surplus kept growing. At first the surplus consisted entirely of excess funds in Social Security and Medicare. But by 1999, revenues were coming in so fast that the government was projecting a budget surplus *outside* of Social Security and Medicare. This enabled Republicans to devise a counterstrategy. They agreed to place the Social Security and Medicare surpluses in a lockbox, meaning they could be used only for debt reduction. But the rest of the surplus could be used for tax cuts or spending. Clinton and the Democrats

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assented to this division.

Although popular with the public, the lockbox idea has always drawn its share of highbrow ridicule. The main criticism holds that it makes no sense to draw divisions between different revenue streams within the federal government. It may seem, after all, a bit odd for one part of the government to owe money to another part. But if you look closely, it makes perfect sense. Social Security and Medicare run surpluses for a reason. When the baby-boomer generation retires, a lot more people will start collecting benefits, and not enough workers will pay taxes to support them. If we kept those programs exclusively "pay as you go," then this added burden would be borne exclusively by future workers. So, starting in the 1980s, Congress raised the taxes that fund those programs—with the explicit goal of creating surpluses within Social Security and Medicare that could help prepare the programs for the coming demographic bulge.

Critics of this arrangement call it an illusion. Since benefits must be paid with resources produced in that year, they argue, we can't use taxes collected in 2001 to cover somebody's Social Security check in 2020. Bush's commission to privatize Social Security has made this argument. "The existence of a positive Trust Fund balance," the commission argued in a report this summer, "does not mean that the government has real economic resources at its disposal."

But *of course* it's possible for today's surpluses to help finance tomorrow's benefits. It all depends on what we do with them. If we use today's surpluses to pay down the national debt, then the government will have lower interest payments in the future, which means more revenue with which to bolster Social Security. Imagine that you start a college tuition fund for your children, but, instead of putting the money in the bank, you use it to pay off your mortgage. The college "fund" may not exist in the sense of having real assets, but every dollar you used to reduce your mortgage is one more dollar you have available for future tuition.

TO PUT IT another way: Right now, Social Security benefits account for just over 4 percent of the gross domestic product. By 2038—the date projections say the Social Security trust fund will be depleted—that will rise to just over 6 percent. But we also currently devote more than 2 percent of GDP to paying interest on the national debt. So the burden of paying for Social Security benefits plus interest on the debt right now roughly equals the burden of paying for Social Security benefits in 37 years. Consequently, if we were to use the Social Security surplus to pay off the entire national debt—which we could likely do before it starts running deficits in 15 years—the program would place no greater burden on the economy at the height of boomer retirement than it does right now.

If, on the other hand, we use the Medicare and Social Security surpluses to fund higher spending or lower taxes, then keeping separate books for Medicare and Social Security really *is* pointless. (The argument is self-fulfilling: Lockbox critics claim the trust fund is a fiction and, therefore, we should spend it; and as a result it becomes a fiction.) If that were the case, then the main function of the Medicare and Social Security surpluses would be to keep payroll taxes (which fund those programs) artificially high and income taxes (which fund the rest of government) artificially low. Since payroll taxes are regressive, such an arrangement would shift the tax burden off the rich and onto the middle class and the poor—a strange thing for liberals to support.

It's also strange that liberals would equate keeping Social Security off-budget with perpetual austerity. True, over the next 15 years, while Social Security is taking in more than it spends, keeping it separate forces the government to run overall surpluses. But, after that, Social Security will begin to spend more than it takes in. At that point, keeping Social Security separate will allow the government to run overall *deficits*. It's the same logic most people use in their own lives: You build up savings while you're working and spend them when you're retired. The lockboxes force the government to save money while the country has a relatively high proportion of workers and lets it spend more when it has a relatively higher proportion of retirees.

USING THE SOCIAL SECURITY and Medicare surpluses to pay down debt also offers broad economic benefits. The national debt is financed through private savings. When the government reduces its debt, those savings can be invested in the private sector instead. That, in turn, allows businesses to invest in more equipment, making them more productive. A more productive private sector allows employers to pay their workers more without sacrificing profits—which leads to higher standards of living for everyone and makes it easier to bear the sacrifices needed to bail out Social Security and Medicare.

In any case, that is the view of most economists. But the pro-debt-reduction consensus has always had dissenters, mainly on the edges of the political spectrum. On the right, supply-siders—who maintain their stranglehold on Republican economic thought—resent debt reduction because it makes it harder to cut taxes, which they believe to be the key to eternal bliss. (The supply-side view was perfectly expressed by a May 14, 2001 *National Review* cover line, which read: "DON'T FEAR A DEFICIT.")

The dissent from the left is nearly parallel. Liberals such as Reich dislike debt reduction because it makes it harder for the government to spend money. Not that Reich is an indiscriminate spender: He and others argue, sensibly, that there are certain investments that only the public sector can make—schools, infrastructure—and which often bear higher returns than private-sector investment. And it's true that, in an ideal liberal world, we would have more public investment. But that ignores politics. In reality, if we cracked open the lockboxes, the resulting money would at best be split between spending and tax cuts, with the spending, in turn, divided between productive investments and unnecessary pork—all in all, a dubious trade-off for fiscal discipline. Just as conservative critics of the lockbox forget that it constrains Democrats from loading up the federal trough, liberal critics forget that it constrains Republicans from enacting tax cuts for the rich.

Until a few months ago, these debates were largely theoretical—preserving the Social Security and Medicare surpluses

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was so popular that almost everyone in both parties swore fealty to the idea. In recent months, however, the dynamic has changed—for two reasons. First, the tax cut has starved the federal budget. Second, an economic slowdown has dried up tax revenues. Whereas a year ago saving the Medicare and Social Security surpluses seemed easy, now it requires painful spending cuts (or painful tax hikes, although no one is proposing that). But economic theory suggests that cutting spending or raising taxes is the last thing you want to do during an economic slowdown. And so the lockboxes have suddenly fallen into disrepute.

The economic theory here is Keynesianism. Its essence is that the federal government should help keep the economy on an even keel. When the economy slows down, the government should stimulate consumer demand by cutting taxes or spending more money. This is the best-known part of the theory because it was famously applied by Franklin Roosevelt during the New Deal. But the corollary is that, when the economy heats up too quickly, the government should pull back by raising taxes or by cutting spending.

The problem with applying Keynesian theory has always been that politicians prefer the first part to the second. It's popular to cut taxes or raise spending; it's unpopular to do the reverse. So the present danger is that, under the guise of stimulating the economy during a slowdown, Democrats and Republicans could abandon their commitment to saving the Social Security and Medicare surpluses. Indeed, that's precisely what many lockbox critics have in mind.

In his article, Reich criticizes Democrats for abandoning Keynesianism. But his proposal isn't exactly Keynesian, either. John Maynard Keynes proposed *temporary* spending to encourage consumers to spend more. Reich wants *permanent* spending increases to raise the productive capacity of the economy. The two notions aren't mutually exclusive, but they aren't the same thing either. For Reich, the current slowdown is a convenient occasion to champion something he would champion even if the economy were booming.

Conservative foes of the lockbox are more disingenuous. Supply-side advocates like those at the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, who have traditionally used the word "Keynesian" as the foulest kind of insult, are suddenly spouting his theories with the zeal of John Kenneth Galbraith. Citing the need for stimulus, a recent *Journal* editorial admonishes, "[T]his is no time to be running a budget surplus." But in the *Journal*'s view, it's *never* time to be running a budget surplus when we could cut taxes instead. If Keynesianism counseled *raising* taxes to cool down an overheating economy, the *Journal* would denounce the theory.

The White House is even more egregiously cloaking non-Keynesian policy in Keynesian rhetoric. There are two parts to Bush's tax cut: the immediate $300 taxpayer rebate and the long-term cuts in income and estate taxes. The former, which was forced on a reluctant White House by congressional Democrats, is a textbook Keynesian stimulus: temporary, spread over a broad number of taxpayers, and implemented quickly enough to help offset a possible recession. By contrast, the estate and income tax cuts, which have been Bush's top priority since the campaign, make no sense whatsoever as economic stimuli. They heap most of their bounty on a small number of wealthy taxpayers who are more likely to save the money than to spend it, don't phase in fully until after any recession would presumably be over, and will drain federal coffers for decades to come. Yet the Bushies have largely succeeded in conflating the two, using popular rebates to lock in long-term tax cuts. The Democrats, pathetically, have barely even attempted to explain this difference.

So how do you promote a short-term economic stimulus without abandoning long-term fiscal responsibility? Ideally, it would be easy. Break the lockboxes this year and next year as well, if necessary. When the economy recovers, replace the money we borrowed from the trust funds. It's OK to splurge in bad times if you're willing to save during good ones.

Unfortunately, this probably won't happen. Good times have a way of inducing myopia. Think back to a year ago, when a booming economy was showering Washington with tax revenues. At the time, then-candidate Bush didn't argue that we should save some of that money for when we'd need it. He said, "The surplus means the government has more money than it needs." The truth is that if we break the lockboxes now, we'll probably never repair them in the future.

The value of the lockboxes is that they have acted for the past several years as a kind of mutually assured political destruction: Neither side wanted to be accused of raiding Social Security, which forced both to maintain some degree of budgetary rectitude. Once this barrier is broached, it's hard to see where it would end. If it's OK to use $5 billion of the Social Security trust fund, why not $10 billion or $100 billion? If it's OK to use it during a slowdown, how about using it during a sluggish recovery, or to pay for a military operation, or to fund a prescription-drug benefit?

The administration sees the slowdown as a wedge to pry open the lockboxes. "Is the economy radically different if the [surplus] is plus one or minus five? The answer is no," asserted Bush economic adviser Larry Lindsey a week ago. And of course he's right. But the danger isn't that we borrow a few billion dollars from the Social Security trust fund this year. It's that we borrow hundreds of billions of dollars in years to come. Bush's budget is already projected to borrow from Social Security in 2003 and 2004—*after* the economy is expected to have recovered. And that unrealistically assumes Congress and Bush will phase out popular tax cuts, forsake popular spending, and otherwise do things nobody expects them to do. Under more credible assumptions, the Social Security and Medicare surpluses are long gone.

In the larger scheme of things, this year's budget—on which both parties and the media have fixated—is little more than a distraction. Sure, it would be nice to pump a little more money into a sagging economy. But it's easy to exaggerate the importance of an economic stimulus right now. Just as the boom lulled us into starry-eyed complacency, a few months of sluggish growth have been imbued with an exaggerated sense of crisis. The long-term need to prepare for the boomers' retirement dwarfs, by an order of magnitude, any short-term benefits of goosing the economy. Better that we have an overly rigid mechanism to ensure the long-term stability of the economy and the budget than no mechanism at all. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Two Ways to Live

COMMUNES ARE CERTAINLY not things of the past; still the new Swedish film **Together** (IFC) has the air of a souvenir. Set in Stockholm in 1975, most of it takes place in a large suburban house, called "Together," where some people live communally. Or as communally as they can. All that they share is the wish to live together, in anti-bourgeois egalitarian terms; but politically and otherwise, they are a mixed lot.

The writer-director was Lukas Moodysson, who was born in 1969, and if he was not a child in such a commune, with some first-hand experience of it, it is hard to think why he would have wanted to make this picture. His directing is smooth; his work with actors—particularly children—is evocative; his characters are understood; but the only comprehensible impulse to make this film at this late date is a wish to unburden oneself.

In the very first shot a man named Goran, the most maturely balanced of the group as it turns out, is listening to the radio when Franco's death is announced. Goran tells the others, jubilation fizzes up, and out of this celebration we meet those others. They include a proselytizing young Communist; a woman who has divorced her husband because she feels politically committed to lesbianism; her ex-husband, who seems to just float around cynically; and Goran's girlfriend, who has an open relationship with him that allows her to sleep with the Communist. (And to have her first orgasm. Those devious Reds!) Soon the commune is joined by Goran's sister, a bourgeois housewife with two children who is fleeing her drunken, battering husband. In the next house live a conventional family who at first merely spy with binoculars but soon become involved.

All the cast are fitted into their roles like astronauts into their space suits, but once we become acquainted with these characters, we know pretty much how they are going to speak and behave along the way. The odd contradiction is that the affectionate relationship between two of the children—the battered wife's thirteen-year-old daughter and the neighbors' fourteen-year-old son—is the most familiar of the lot and yet the most taking.

Brimful of feeling as all these people are, tenderly reminiscent as Moodysson is, the effect of the film is less sympathy than irritation. The impulse to withdraw from the sullied world, à la Thoreau but with sex, touches remembrances of youthful impatience with the world as it is. But the fakery involved in this withdrawal from society's patterns is irritating. The group will not have Coca-Cola in the house because they want to resist corporate globalization, but they drive a station wagon. That car was not made by some village tinker, and the fuel for the car was not cranked up from a neighbor's oil well.

The picture ends with an impromptu game of football (soccer to us) in which all the members of the cast, commune members and others, romp together. It is much like the finale of a feel-good musical, in which people who have had troubles for two hours are enfolded in a rosy finish. That game puts the cap on it. Despite the scrabblings toward good-hearted truth in *Together*, it is basically pernicious, glibly analgesic, and misleading. It is drugging without drugs.

In art of any kind, simplicity is tough. Complicated. To begin with, it comes in numerous shades. For instance, Woody Allen's latest, about the jade scorpion, has the simplicity of a sophisticate on holiday from, as he thinks, his usual profundity. At the other end of the spectrum are such films as *Tender Mercies* and *The Straight Story*, whose quiet strength comes from humility in the face of grave subjects and from the dignity that restraint can inspire.

Another simplicity, an atmosphere rooted in a culture, is the signet of recent films from Iran. Many of them deal with children (we are told that Iranian filmmakers focus often on children because they can thus avoid trouble with the censorious government), but some of them have treated other matters, not least the subjugation of women. Whatever the subject, whatever the heavy governmental breathing down artists' necks, something in Iranian culture nourishes the idea of simplicity in art, of largeness achieved by concentration rather than by size. It is, strangely enough, as if they had all read their Blake and could see the world in a grain of sand.

Djomeh (New Yorker) is not among the best of the Iranian imports—its thematic compass is smaller—but it certainly shares some of the attributes of the best: patience and a belief that every human face is important. This film was written and directed by Hassan Yektapanah, who has been an assistant to Abbas Kiarostami, and he shows, beneficially, the influence of that master.

Djomeh is a twenty-year-old Afghani émigré in Iran who has left his own country because of troubles in love. He works now on a small dairy farm owned by a man named Mahmoud, works hard and lives simply. Djomeh has seen—but, in our sense of the word, has not met—a girl named Setareh, the daughter of a shopkeeper in a nearby village, and he is smitten. Most of the story is concerned with his efforts to propose to her, efforts that must proceed through a fixed protocol. The conclusion of the story is, in a way, embodied in the story throughout.

Plentiful films have treated the subject of star-crossed love, love between persons of different races or religions or politics. But *Djomeh* is much less a love story than an account of the self, Djomeh's self: who he is, how he hopes and cares, his persistence in a quest that would be difficult in any case but is aggravated by his foreignness in this country. Before the finish, we can almost see the filaments of society that are holding him in place. He has a fate, a future, in which loneliness will have some part.

Many of the directing touches reflect the filmic milieu in which Yektapanah has grown. With his cinematographer, Ali Loghmani, he enlists the brown landscape in his drama. And he often uses an automobile interior as particularized space, for dialogue between the driver of a car and the person next to him. This is hardly a novel idea in the world of film, but when it is used as a kind of pressure chamber, the way that Kiarostami used it in *A Taste of Cherry*, it intensifies relationships. The core of such scenes is not camera cleverness, but the humanity to be found in the characters—thus in the director's choice of actors. In this case the actors are Jalil Nazari as Djomeh and Mahmoud Behraznia as his boss. They are not virtuoso actors by our standards; rather, they seem to be persons committed, as the director is, to a hope for revelation, instead of display. Since actors of this humanistic concentration are often

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found in Iranian films, we have to wonder where they come from. Is there a corps of such actors from which a director can draw? Or does he, as Robert Bresson did, find individuals whom he thinks apt and, with empathy and time, draw out of them as much of a performance as the film needs? ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

Celebrity Classics

IN *THE SEAGULL*, Chekhov tells us that Maupassant ran away from the Eiffel Tower to escape its crushing, overwhelming vulgarity. That is how I usually feel about celebrity classics. Heaven knows, these star-studded dress parades have not proved very satisfying in the past. The only memorable thing about a forgettable *Twelfth Night* in Central Park in 1989, starring Michelle Pfeiffer, Gregory Hines, and Jeff Goldblum, was how it widened the great divide between movie acting and stage acting. A similar problem afflicted Mike Nichols's *Waiting for Godot* at Lincoln Center in 1988, in which Robin Williams as Gogo spent a lot of stage time squeezing his eyes into his patented smile, horsing around with his part, even leaping into the audience to sign autographs.

Celebrity Chekhov is somewhat more problematic. Those with long memories may recall a lackluster production of *Three Sisters* in 1943 starring Katherine Cornell, Ruth Gordon, and Judith Anderson, or an even more catastrophic Actors Studio production of the play some twenty years later starring Kim Stanley, Geraldine Page, Kevin McCarthy, and Shelley Winters. None of these stars was basically unequipped to play Chekhov's characters. All of them, in fact, were considerably accomplished performers. They were simply incapable of sufficiently submerging their idiosyncratic, charismatic personal styles into the synergy of an ensemble. Without this capacity, Chekhov founders like a leaky bucket, which is why *The Seagull* was such a flop when it was first performed in Moscow by pickup actors, and such a rousing success when it was revived a few years later by Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theater company.

Good ensemble playing is especially important in *The Seagull* because the play is so preoccupied with the purpose of theater and the nature of acting. It is no accident that the very first thing the audience sees upon taking its seats at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park is a stage being erected in front of a lake, designed to accommodate Treplev's obscure little monologue about the "World Soul." Stage and lake, representing artifice and nature, are, in fact, the key images of *The Seagull*, which measures the varying degrees to which artists are capable of evoking reality. Not only does the play feature two actors (Arkadina and Nina) and two writers (Trigorin and Treplev), but virtually everybody else in it either wants to be an artist or has opinions about art. The sympathetic Dr. Dorn is the only one to admire Treplev's play, but nevertheless advises him to provide his work with purpose. Even Arkadina's boorish steward, Shamrayev, when he is not refusing to furnish her with horses, is busy boring everybody to death with his rambles about the old idols of the popular stage.

By contrasting the creative attitudes of his actors and writers, Chekhov is suggesting something about art and nature, and especially about the nature of art. Arkadina is a grande dame of the reigning commercial theater; Trigorin is a driven but second-rate short-story writer and quondam dramatist; Treplev is a would-be avant-gardist trying to satisfy his passion for new forms by writing in the dreamy, abstract style of Maeterlinck and Strindberg. It is typical of Chekhov's modesty that nobody in the play represents the kind of subtle impressionist art that the playwright himself practiced. Trigorin does, a little, when writing about landscapes; but it is probably Nina who, after much personal adversity and artistic suffering—and after overcoming her weakness for fame and celebrity—may be evolving into the kind of truthful artist that Chekhov himself aspired to be. At the end of the play, in a rare moment of self-revelation, Chekhov expresses his artistic credo through the mouth of Treplev, namely that good writing is characterized less by formal innovation than by emotional sincerity and spiritual truth: "The more I think of it the more I'm convinced it's nothing to do with old or new—one has to write without thinking of forms at all—just let it flow naturally from the soul." Unable to act on his own discovery, Treplev puts a bullet through his head.

This is an admittedly long-winded way of saying why I felt so apprehensive about the star-studded cast that Mike Nichols assembled for **The Seagull** at the **New York Shakespeare Festival**. Indeed, I came to the show with my review mentally half-written, full of admonitions about the cultural chasm dividing the two coasts, about how you do not form an ensemble by throwing a bunch of people together for the first time, about how movie stars cannot abandon the stage for years and expect still to feel comfortable on it. Yet I was agreeably surprised to see a generally unified acting company performing a great play with remarkable precision under a masterly director. On the strength of this production alone, and on the arguable assumption that they would choose to continue working together, these actors have the potential to become one of the finest companies in the world.

There are, of course, things to quarrel with in this production. It is not the definitive *Seagull*. But then no production of a great play is definitive—not even Stanislavsky's celebrated version, which, according to Chekhov, turned his characters into crybabies. But Nichols's production is a thoroughly engrossing, carefully detailed approach to the play, with some performances that touch sublimity.

I still believe that pickup casts, no matter how glamorous, are invariably inferior to permanent ensembles, no matter how workaday. But these actors are not exactly strangers to one another. Many of them have not only performed under Nichols before, they have also acted together on both stage and screen. Meryl Streep (Arkadina) and Kevin Kline (Trigorin) starred in *Sophie's Choice*; Christopher Walken (Sorin) appeared with Streep in *The Deer Hunter*; Stephen Spinella (Medvedenko) was on stage with Marcia Gay Harden (Masha) in *Angels in America*, and later appeared with Walken in *The Dead*, and so forth. This is no itinerant gathering of stars, but a dedicated band of serious artists, many of whom share a

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similar aesthetic and training.

The two major exceptions to this rule are Philip Seymour Hoffman (Treplev) and Natalie Portman (Nina), who, though perhaps not for that reason, are the weakest elements in the evening. Chekhov would probably feel that Hoffman, a splendid if overly chunky actor seriously miscast as Treplev, was one of Stanislavsky's crybabies. Hoffman certainly seems to be playing his final action the moment he appears on stage—weeping, whining, shouting, and neurotically flailing about as if he were planning his suicide for the first act instead of the fourth. Nor is he helped much by Portman's vaguely callow Nina, who faints almost as often as Treplev weeps. I found myself further distracted by her debutante slouch, her habit of breaking into sudden, involuntary giggles, and her curiously gauche costuming. Indeed, most of the women's costumes (Arkadina's excepted) are surprisingly uninspired, despite having been designed by the incomparable Bob Crowley. On the other hand, Crowley's bucolic forest of young birches, exquisitely lighted by Jennifer Tipton, turns Central Park into a magical Russian estate ("directly in the flight path of the Smolensk airport," a voice warns us before the show begins, to account for the noise of the planes overhead).

Most of the other actors are superb, including those in such relatively minor roles as Shamrayev (John Goodman's sunny nature disguising the face of a brutish and vulgar lout) and Masha (Marcia Gay Harden's dark good looks gradually deteriorating, through her compulsiveness and addictiveness, into coarseness and vulgarity). Christopher Walken has once again not fared well with the critics; but it is time people recognized that he is one of the great American actors. I found his Sorin to be one of the most deliberate and surprising moment-to-moment performances I have ever seen. At first glance he would seem to have been better cast in the part of Trigorin (Walken probably thought so, too). But Nichols's instinct was correct. Instead of the decrepit, disappointed invalid of tradition, Walken creates a seedy remnant of a once elegant man, with a sublime sense of humor that infects the audience with every line. His fainting scene, in which he starts a merry dance, then seems to feign tripping, falls to the ground, and lies perfectly still in the first stages of a stroke, is alone worth the price of admission (even if admission to the park is free).

The Dr. Dorn of Larry Pine (he played Astrov in *Vanya on 42nd Street*) is the soul of sympathy, performed with deceptive effortlessness and a whiskey baritone reminiscent of Jason Robards. Kevin Kline's Trigorin has been criticized for being too passive and melancholy, but those are the requirements of the character, and Kline fulfills them with modesty and grace. Costumed in a Byronic style—white suit and open shirt—that enhances his sexual attractiveness, he perfectly captures the way an uncertain ego can be flattered into an infatuation (he lays claim to Nina by placing his hat on her head). When he tries to leave Arkadina, he does an arc from determination to apathy, after having been literally pinned to the floor. In the act of making love to her, he pauses to make a note for a short story. (Arkadina, lying on top of him, speaks her famous aside, "Now he is mine," directly into his ear.)

Which brings us to Meryl Streep, who is back on stage in fine comic fettle as if that long hiatus of twenty years had never occurred. Comedy is a style she uses too rarely nowadays. Not since her Dunyasha in Serban's *Cherry Orchard* has she had such a giddy romp. Streep seems to have overcome her worst acting problem, the habit of not looking at the people to whom she is speaking; and her meticulous preparation for her role has not affected her capacity to create an illusion of spontaneity. (Streep's acting is so real that one is not sure whether the character has misquoted *Hamlet* or the actress has forgotten her lines.) Playing a vigorous, muscular character who is the polar opposite of those lachrymose movie victims she has been saddled with in Hollywood, she shows us a woman at once vain and compassionate, miserly and generous, humorous and humorless. After she and Treplev have their Gertrude-Hamlet exchange, she encourages applause with subtle motions of her hands. She interpolates songs to relieve her insupportable boredom and warbles Russian lullabies while bandaging her son's head. Demonstrating her physical and temperamental superiority to the younger Masha, she performs a cartwheel, then pauses to rub an arthritic joint. When Shamrayev refuses to give her horses—"Which horses?" he asks. "Their names?" she responds in outrage—Streep falls on the floor in a theatrical swoon, screaming, "I am insulted by everyone!" The last moment of the play, when she catches a hint of Treplev's death on Trigorin's face as the lights are going down, is, though wordless, one of the most expressive moments of the production.

I have not said a lot about Mike Nichols's direction because, as he demonstrated in his excellent *Uncle Vanya* some years ago, he never lets you know where the acting ends and the directing begins. But there is no question who has been largely responsible for the high quality of the performances and the evenness of the ensemble. The only intrusive directorial gesture, a moment that has attracted great praise though it belongs in the movies, is when Treplev's shot to his head is signaled by a smear of blood on the back of his chair. As you might expect,

Saint Augustine's Dog

The story goes that Augustine was writing a letter
to ask Jerome about the state of the blessed
when a sudden light surprised him.
In the painting by Carpaccio you can see
his pen stuck in the air above the page, his head
tilted to the window, as he listens
to the voice of Jerome describing
his death and ascent to Christ. How rarely
are questions answered with such certainty.
Yet even a saint might feel bereft
for a while, unless for him
absence doesn't mean what it means
to most of us. So Augustine gazes out of his window
with an unreadable expression. And the painter
carefully keeps the miraculous from us—
no billowy figure floating through the sky, no sign
of an angel, only the light which could be
the light of any day. A cloud passes
from the face of the sun, and a man
working in his study might look up, arrested
by the unexpected and the ordinary,
while on the floor beside him his dog
is sitting, head tilted toward the vision,
or toward the man who might now be ready
to go outside for a walk. No reason,
the dog is thinking, to bark
or make a ruckus. Whatever
happens next will happen soon enough.

Lawrence Raab

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Nichols has stressed the comic aspects of *The Seagull*, even squeezing laughs out of Treplev's little playlet, but Chekhov did insist all along that he had written a comedy.

A word about Tom Stoppard's adaptation. It is funny, vivid, clear, speakable, usually eloquent—and finally unsatisfying. It is not just that some of the exchanges between Arkadina and Treplev in their quarrel scene were interpolated from *Waiting for Godot*. (Treplev taunts his mother by calling her "Comedienne," and she annihilates him with Beckett's most insulting expletive, "Critic!") But when Nina is meant to say that the most important quality for an actress is not the dream of fame but rather "endurance" or "resignation" or "persistence," as it is variously translated, Stoppard substitutes the word "stamina," as if to suggest that great acting is indistinguishable from long-distance running. I tend to admire Stoppard's adaptations more than his plays. He is a gifted impersonator with a great talent for capturing the style of other writers. But I have a sneaking suspicion that the adaptation Nichols commissioned from Richard Nelson, which Streep rejected, might have been the stronger version.

And a final word about reviewers. I speculated earlier that the artists associated with *The Seagull* were capable of evolving into one of the great theater companies of the world, if only they could make the commitment. The main obstacle to such a development has always been the incapacity of agent-driven stars to absorb the message of the play: namely, that great acting is defined by seeking truth in art, not by the pursuit of Oscars or the acquisition of real estate in Bel Air. It now seems likely that an equally great deterrent is the insensitivity of theater critics, whose thoughtless notices can drive good actors back to what is safe and secure, and discourage them from risking their careers on the stage. ■

When misogyny becomes a health problem.

The Many Faces of Gender Inequality

By AMARTYA SEN

I.

IT WAS MORE than a century ago, in 1870, that Queen Victoria wrote to Sir Theodore Martin complaining about "this mad, wicked folly of 'Woman's Rights.'" The formidable empress certainly did not herself need any protection that the acknowledgment of women's rights might offer. Even at the age of eighty, in 1899, she could write to Arthur James Balfour that "we are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist." Yet that is not the way most people's lives go, reduced and defeated as they frequently are by adversities. And within every community, nationality, and class, the burden of hardship often falls disproportionately on women.

The afflicted world in which we live is characterized by a deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between women and men. Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world, from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekistan to the United States. Yet inequality between women and men is not everywhere the same. It can take many different forms. Gender inequality is not one homogeneous phenomenon, but a collection of disparate and inter-linked problems. I will discuss just a few of the varieties of the disparity between the genders.

Mortality inequality. In some regions in the world, inequality between women and men directly involves matters of life and death, and takes the brutal form of unusually high mortality rates for women and a consequent preponderance of men in the total population, as opposed to the preponderance of women found in societies with little or no gender bias in health care and nutrition. Mortality inequality has been observed and documented extensively in North Africa and in Asia, including China and South Asian nations.

Natality inequality. Given the preference for boys over girls that characterizes many male-dominated societies, gender inequality can manifest itself in the form of parents' wanting a baby to be a boy rather than a girl. There was a time when this could be no more than a wish—a daydream or a nightmare, depending on one's perspective. But with the availability of modern techniques to determine the gender of a fetus, sex-selective abortion has become common in many countries. It is especially prevalent in East Asia, in China and South Korea in particular; but it is found also in Singapore and Taiwan, and it is beginning to emerge as a statistically significant phenomenon in India and in other parts of South Asia as well. This is high-tech sexism.

Basic-facility inequality. Even when demographic characteristics do not show much anti-female bias or any at all, there are other ways in which women can get less than a square deal. Afghanistan may be the only country in the world where the government is keen on actively excluding girls from schooling (the Taliban regime combines this with other features of massive gender inequality); but there are many countries in Asia and Africa, and also in Latin America, where girls have far less opportunity for schooling than do boys. And there are other deficiencies in basic facilities available to women, varying from encouragement to cultivate one's natural talents to fair participation in social functions of the community.

Special-opportunity inequality. Even when there is relatively little difference in basic facilities including schooling, the opportunities for higher education may be far fewer for young women than for young men. Indeed, gender bias in higher education and professional training can be observed even in some of the richest countries in the world, in Europe and North America. Sometimes this type of asymmetry has been based on the superficially innocuous idea that the respective "provinces" of men and women are just different. This thesis has been championed in different forms over the centuries, and it has always enjoyed a great implicit, as well as explicit, following. It was presented with particular directness more than one hundred years before Queen Victoria's complaint about "woman's rights" by the Reverend James Fordyce in his *Sermons to Young Women* (1766), a book that, as Mary Wollstonecraft noted in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), had been "long made a part of woman's library." Fordyce warned the young women to whom his sermons were addressed against "those masculine women that would plead for your sharing any part of their province with us," identifying the province of men as including not only "war," but also "commerce, politics, exercises of strength and dexterity, abstract philosophy and all the abstruser sciences."

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Such clear-cut beliefs about the provinces of men and women are now rather rare, but the presence of extensive gender asymmetry can be seen in many areas of education, training, and professional work even in Europe and North America.

Professional inequality. In employment as well as promotion in work and occupation, women often face greater handicaps than men. A country such as Japan may be quite egalitarian in matters of demography or basic facilities, and even to a great extent in higher education, and yet progress to elevated levels of employment and occupation seems to be much more problematic for women than for men. In the English television series *Yes, Minister*, there was an episode in which the Minister, full of reforming zeal, is trying to ascertain from the immovable permanent secretary, Sir Humphrey, how many women are in senior positions in the British civil service. Sir Humphrey says that it is very difficult to give an exact number; it would require a lot of investigation. The Minister is insistent, and wants to know approximately how many women are in these senior positions. To which Sir Humphrey finally replies, "Approximately, none."

Ownership inequality. In many societies, the ownership of property can also be very unequal. Even basic assets such as homes and land may be very asymmetrically shared. The absence of claims to property can not only reduce the voice of women, it can also make it harder for women to enter and to flourish in commercial, economic, and even some social activities. Inequality in property ownership is quite widespread across the world, but its severity can vary with local rules. In India, for example, traditional inheritance laws were heavily weighed in favor of male children (until the legal reforms after independence), but the community of Nairs (a large caste in Kerala) has had matrilineal inheritance for a very long time.

Household inequality. Often there are fundamental inequalities in gender relations within the family or the household. This can take many different forms. Even in cases in which there are no overt signs of anti-female bias in, say, mortality rates, or male preference in births, or in education, or even in promotion to higher executive positions, family arrangements can be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care. It is quite common in many societies to take for granted that men will naturally work outside the home, whereas women could do so if and only if they could combine such work with various inescapable and unequally shared household duties. This is sometimes called a "division of labor," though women could be forgiven for seeing it as an "accumulation of labor." The reach of this inequality includes not only unequal relations within the family, but also derivative inequalities in employment and recognition in the outside world. Also, the established persistence of this type of "division" or "accumulation" of labor can also have far-reaching effects on the knowledge and the understanding of different types of work in professional circles. In the 1970s, when I first started working on gender inequality, I remember being struck by the fact that the Handbook of Human Nutrition Requirements of the World Health Organization, in presenting "calorie requirements" for different categories of people, chose to classify household work as "sedentary activity," requiring very little deployment of energy. I was not able to determine precisely how this remarkable bit of information had been collected.

II.

IT IS IMPORTANT to take note of the implications of the varieties of gender inequality. The variations entail that inequality between women and men cannot be confronted and overcome by one all-purpose remedy. Over time, moreover, the same country can move from one type of gender inequality to another. I shall presently argue that there is new evidence that India, my own country, is undergoing just such a transformation at this time. The different forms of gender inequality may also impose adversities on the lives of men and boys, in addition to those of women and girls. In understanding the different aspects of the evil of gender inequality, we have to look beyond the predicament of women and examine the problems created for men as well by the asymmetrical treatment of women. These causal connections can be very significant, and they can vary with the form of gender inequality. Finally, inequalities of different kinds can frequently nourish one another, and we have to be aware of their linkages.

In what follows, a substantial part of my empirical focus will be on two of the most elementary kinds of gender inequality: mortality inequality and natality inequality. I shall be concerned particularly with gender inequality in South Asia, the so-called Indian subcontinent. While I shall separate out the subcontinent for special attention, I must warn against the smugness of thinking that the United States and Western Europe are free from gender bias simply because some of the empirical generalizations that can be made about other regions of the world would not hold in the West. Given the many faces of gender inequality, much depends on which face we look at.

Consider the fact that India, along with Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, has had female heads of government, which the United States and Japan have not yet had (and do not seem very likely to have in the immediate future, if I am any judge). Indeed, in the case of Bangladesh, where both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition are women, one might begin to wonder whether any man could soon rise to a leadership position there. To take another bit of anecdotal evidence against Western complacence in this matter: I had a vastly larger proportion of tenured women colleagues when I was a professor at Delhi University—as long ago as the 1960s—than I had in the 1990s at Harvard University or presently have at Trinity College, Cambridge. And another example, of a more personal kind: when I was searching, a few years ago, for an early formulation of the contrast between the instrumental importance of wealth and the intrinsic value of human life, I found such a view in the words of Maitreyee, a woman intellectual depicted in the Upanishads, which date from the eighth century B.C.E. The classic formulation of this distinction, of course, would come about four centuries later, in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*; but it is interesting that the first sharp formulation of the value of living should have come from a woman thinker in a society that has not yet—three thousand years later—been able to overcome the mortality differential between women and men. In the scale of mortality inequality, India is close to the bottom of the league in gender disparity, along with Pakistan and Bangladesh; and natality inequality is also beginning to rear its ugly head very firmly and very fast in the subcontinent in our own day.

IN THE BULK of the subcontinent, with only a few exceptions (such as Sri Lanka and the state of Kerala in India), female mortality rates are very significantly higher than what could be expected given the mortality patterns of men (in the respective age groups). This type of gender inequality need not entail any conscious homicide, and it would be a mistake to try to explain this large phenomenon by invoking the cases of female infanticide that are reported from China or India: those are truly dreadful events, but they are relatively rare. The mortality disadvantage of women works, rather, mainly through the widespread neglect of health, nutrition and other interests of women that influence their survival.

It is sometimes presumed that there

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are more women than men in the world, since such a preponderance is well known to be the case in Europe and North America, which have an average female-to-male ratio of 1.05 or so (that is, about 105 women to 100 men). Yet women do not outnumber men in the world as a whole. Indeed, there are only about 98 women per 100 men on the globe. This "shortfall" of women is most acute in Asia and North Africa. The number of females per 100 males in the total population is 97 in Egypt and Iran, 95 in Bangladesh and Turkey, 94 in China, 93 in India and Pakistan, and 84 in Saudi Arabia (though the last ratio is considerably reduced by the presence of male migrant workers from elsewhere in Asia).

It has been widely observed that given similar health care and nutrition, women tend typically to have lower age-specific mortality rates than men. Indeed, even female fetuses tend to have a lower probability of miscarriage than male fetuses. Everywhere in the world, more male babies are born than female babies (and an even higher proportion of male fetuses are conceived compared with female fetuses); but throughout their respective lives the proportion of males goes on falling as we move to higher and higher age groups, due to typically greater male mortality rates. The excess of females over males in the populations of Europe and North America comes about as a result of this greater survival chance of females in different age groups.

In many parts of the world, however, women receive less attention and health care than do men, and girls in particular often receive very much less support than boys. As a result of this gender bias, the mortality rates of females often exceed those of males in these countries. The concept of the "missing women" was devised to give some idea of the enormity of the phenomenon of women's adversity in mortality by focusing on the women who are simply not there, owing to mortality rates that are unusually high compared with male mortality rates. The basic idea is to find some rough and ready way to understand the quantitative difference between the actual number of women in these countries and the number of women that we could expect to see if the gender pattern of mortality were similar there to the patterns in other regions of the world that do not demonstrate a significant bias against women in health care and other attentions relevant for survival.

We may take the ratio of women to men in sub-Saharan Africa as the standard, since there is relatively little bias against women in health care, social status, and mortality rates there, even though the absolute numbers are quite dreadful for both men and women. When estimating the size of the phenomenon of "missing women" in the mid-1980s, I used the prevailing female-male ratio in sub-Saharan Africa, around 1.022, as the standard. For example, with India's female-male ratio of 0.93, there is a total difference of 9 percent (of the male population) between that ratio and the sub-Saharan standard used for comparison. In 1986, this yielded a figure of 37 million missing women. Using the same sub-Saharan standard, China had 44 million missing women; and it became evident that, for the world as a whole, the magnitude of the gender shortfall easily exceeded 100 million. Other standards and other methods may also be used: Ansley Coale and Stephan Klasen have arrived at somewhat different numbers, but invariably very large ones. (Klasen's total number is about 80 million missing women.) So gender bias in mortality takes an astonishingly heavy toll.

How can this be reversed? Some economic models have tended to relate the neglect of women to the lack of economic empowerment of women. Ester Boserup, an early feminist economist, in her classic book *Women's Role in Economic Development*, published in 1970, discussed how the status and the standing of women are enhanced by economic independence (such as gainful employment). Others have tried to link the neglect of girls to the higher economic returns for the family from boys compared with girls. I believe that the former line of reasoning, which takes fuller note of social considerations that take us beyond any hard-headed calculation of relative returns from rearing girls vis-à-vis boys, is broader and more promising; but no matter which interpretation is taken, women's gainful employment, especially in more rewarding occupations, clearly does play a role in improving the life prospects of women and girls. So, too, does women's literacy. And there are other factors that can be seen as adding to the standing and to the voice of women in family decisions.

The experience of the state of Kerala in India is instructive in this matter. Kerala provides a sharp contrast with many other parts of the country in having little or no gender bias in mortality. The life expectancy of Kerala women at birth is above 76 (compared with 70 for men), and even more remarkably, the female-male ratio of Kerala's population is 1.06 according to the 2001 census, much the same as Europe or North America. Kerala has a population of 30 million, so it is an example that involves a fair number of people. The causal variables related to women's empowerment can be

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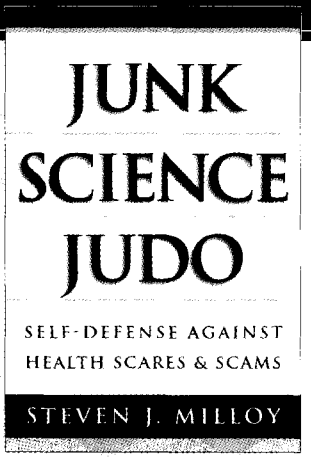

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seen as playing a role here, since Kerala has a very high level of women's literacy (nearly universal for the younger age groups), and also much more access for women to well-paid and well-respected jobs.

One of the other influences of women's empowerment, a decline in fertility, is also observed in Kerala, where the fertility rate has fallen very fast (much faster, incidentally, than in China, despite Chinese coercive measures in birth control). The fertility rate in Kerala is 1.7 (roughly interpretable as an average of 1.7 children per couple), and it is one of the lowest in the developing world—about the same as in Britain and in France, and much lower than in the United States. We can see in these observations the general influence of women's education and empowerment.

Yet we must also take note of other special features of Kerala as well, including female ownership of property for an influential part of the Hindu population (the Nairs); openness to, and interaction with, the outside world (Christians form about one-fifth of the population and have been in Kerala much longer—since the fourth century—than they have been in, say, Britain, not to mention the very old community of Jews in Kerala); and activist left-wing politics with a particularly egalitarian commitment, which has tended to focus strongly on issues of equity (not only between classes and castes, but also between women and men). While these influences may work in the same way as the impact of female education and employment in reducing mortality inequality, they can have different roles in dealing with other problems, particularly the problem of natality inequality.

III.

THE PROBLEM OF gender bias in life and death has been much discussed, but there are other issues of gender inequality that are sorely in need of greater investigation. I will note four substantial phenomena that happen to be quite widely observed in South Asia.

There is, first, the problem of the undernourishment of girls as compared with boys. At the time of birth, girls are obviously no more nutritionally deprived than boys, but this situation changes as society's unequal treatment takes over from the non-discrimination of nature. There has been plenty of aggregative evidence on this for quite some time now; but it has been accompanied by some anthropological skepticism about the appropriateness of using aggregate statistics with pooled data from different regions to interpret the behavior of individual families. Still, there have also been more detailed and concretely local studies on this subject, and they confirm the picture that emerges on the basis of aggregate statistics. One case study from India, which I myself undertook in 1983 along with Sunil Sengupta, involved weighing every child in two large villages. The time pattern that emerged from this study, which concentrated particularly on weight-for-age as the chosen indicator of nutritional level for children under five, showed clearly how an initial neonatal condition of broad nutritional symmetry turns gradually into a situation of significant female disadvantage. The local investigations tend to confirm rather than contradict the picture that emerges from aggregate statistics.

In interpreting the causal process that leads to this female disadvantage, it is important to emphasize that the lower level of nourishment of girls may not relate directly to their being underfed as compared with boys. Often enough, the differences may arise more from the neglect of heath care of girls compared with what boys receive. Indeed, there is some direct information about comparative medical neglect of girls vis-à-vis boys in South Asia. When I studied, with Jocelyn Kynch, admissions data from two large public hospitals in Bombay, it was very striking to find clear evidence that the admitted girls were typically more ill than the boys, suggesting that a girl has to be more stricken and more ill before she is taken to the hospital. Undernourishment may well result from a greater incidence of illness, which can adversely affect both the absorption of nutrients and the performance of bodily functions.

There is, secondly, a high incidence of maternal undernourishment in South Asia. Indeed, in this part of the world, maternal undernutrition is much more common than in most other regions. Comparisons of body mass index (BMI), which is essentially a measure of weight for height, bring this out clearly enough, as do statistics of such consequential characteristics as the incidence of anemia.

Thirdly, there is the problem of the prevalence of low birth weight. In South Asia, as many as 21 percent of children are born clinically underweight (by accepted medical standards), more than in any other substantial region in the world. The predicament of being low in weight in childhood seems often enough to begin at birth in the case of South Asian children. In terms of weight for age, around 40 to 60 percent of the children in South Asia are undernourished, compared with 20 to 40 percent undernourishment even in sub-Saharan Africa. The children start deprived and stay deprived. Finally, there is also a high incidence of cardiovascular diseases. Generally, South Asia stands out as having more cardiovascular diseases than any other part of the Third World. Even when other countries, such as China, show a greater prevalence of the standard predisposing conditions to such illness, the subcontinental population seems to have more heart problems than these other countries.

IT IS NOT difficult to see that the first three of these problems are very likely connected causally. The neglect of the care of girls and women, and the underlying gender bias that their experience reflects, would tend to yield more maternal undernourishment; and this in turn would tend to yield more fetal deprivation and distress, and underweight babies, and child undernourishment. But what about the higher incidence of cardiovascular diseases among South Asian adults? In interpreting this phenomenon, we can draw on the pioneering work of a British medical team led by D. J. P. Barker. Based on English data, Barker has shown that low birth weight is closely associated with the higher incidence, many decades later, of several adult diseases, including hypertension, glucose intolerance, and other cardiovascular hazards.

The robustness of the statistical connections and the causal mechanisms involved in the retardation of intrauterine growth can be further investigated, but as matters stand the medical evidence that Barker has produced linking the two phenomena offers the possibility of proposing a causal relation between the different empirical observations of the harsh fate of girls and women in South Asia and the phenomenon of high incidence of cardiovascular diseases in South Asia. This strongly suggests a causal pattern that goes from the nutritional neglect of women to maternal undernourishment, and thence to fetal growth retardation and underweight babies, and thence to greater incidence of cardiovascular afflictions much later in adult life (along with the phenomenon of undernourished children in the shorter run). In sum: what begins as a neglect of the interests of women ends up causing adversities in the health and the survival of all, even at an advanced age.

These biological connections illustrate a more general point: gender inequality can hurt the interests of men as well as women. Indeed, men suffer far more from cardiovascular diseases than do women. Given the uniquely critical role of women in the reproductive process, it would be hard to imagine that the deprivation to which women are subjected would not have some adverse impact on the lives of

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all people—men as well as women, adults as well as children—who are "born of a woman," as the Book of Job says. It would appear that the extensive penalties of neglecting the welfare of women rebound on men with a vengeance.

BUT THERE ARE also other connections between the disadvantage of women and the general condition of society—non-biological connections—that operate through women's conscious agency. The expansion of women's capabilities not only enhances women's own freedom and well-being, it also has many other effects on the lives of all. An enhancement of women's active agency can contribute substantially to the lives of men as well as women, children as well as adults: many studies have demonstrated that the greater empowerment of women tends to reduce child neglect and mortality, to decrease fertility and overcrowding, and more generally to broaden social concern and care.

These examples can be supplemented by considering the functioning of women in other areas, including in the fields of economics and politics. Substantial linkages between women's agency and social achievements have been noted in many different countries. There is plenty of evidence that whenever social and economic arrangements depart from the standard practice of male ownership, women can seize business and economic initiative with much success. It is also clear that the result of women's participation in economic life is not merely to generate income for women, but also to provide many other social benefits that derive from their enhanced status and independence. The remarkable success of organizations such as the Grameen Bank and BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) in Bangladesh is a good example of this, and there is some evidence that the high-profile presence of women in social and political life in that country has drawn substantial support from women's economic involvement and from a changed image of the role of women.

The Reverend Fordyces of the world may disapprove of "those masculine women" straying into men's "province," but the character of modern Bangladesh reflects in many different and salutary ways the increasing agency of women. The precipitate fall of the total fertility rate in Bangladesh from 6.1 to 3.0 in the course of two decades (perhaps the fastest such decline in the world) is clearly related to the changed economic and social roles of women, along with increases in family-planning facilities. There have also been cultural influences leading to a re-thinking of the nature of the family, as Alaka Basu and Sajeda Amin have shown recently in *Population and Development Review*. Changes can also be observed in parts of India where women's empowerment has expanded, with more literacy and greater economic and social involvements outside the home.

IV.

THERE IS SOMETHING to cheer in the developments that I have been discussing, and there is considerable evidence of a weakened hold of gender disparity in several fields in the subcontinent; but the news is not, alas, all good. There is also evidence of a movement in the contrary direction, at least with regard to natality inequality. This has been brought out sharply by the early results of the 2001 decennial national census in India, the results of which are still being tabulated and analyzed. Early results indicate that even though the overall female-male ratio has improved slightly for the country as a whole (with a corresponding reduction of the proportion of "missing women"), the female-male ratio for children has suffered a substantial decline. For India as a whole, the female-male ratio of the population under age six has fallen from 94.5 girls per 100 boys in 1991 to 92.7 girls per 100 boys in 2001. While there has been no such decline in some parts of the country (most notably Kerala), it has fallen very sharply in Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, which are among the richer Indian states.

Taking together all the evidence that exists, it is clear that this change reflects not a rise in female child mortality, but a fall in female births vis-à-vis male births; and it is almost certainly connected with the increased availability and the greater use of gender determination of fetuses. Fearing that sex-selective abortion might occur in India, the Indian parliament some years ago banned the use of sex determination techniques for fetuses, except as a by-product of other necessary medical investigation. But it appears that the enforcement of this law has been comprehensively neglected. When questioned about the matter by Celia Dugger, the energetic correspondent of *The New York Times*, the police cited difficulties in achieving successful prosecution owing to the reluctance of mothers to give evidence of the use of such techniques.

I do not believe that this need be an insurmountable difficulty (other types of evidence can in fact be used for prosecution), but the reluctance of the mothers to give evidence brings out perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this natality inequality. I refer to the "son preference" that many Indian mothers themselves seem to harbor. This form of gender inequality cannot be removed, at least in the short run, by the enhancement of women's empowerment and agency, since that agency is itself an integral part of the cause of natality inequality.

Policy initiatives have to take adequate note of the fact that the pattern of gender inequality seems to be shifting in India, right at this time, from mortality inequality (the female life expectancy at birth has now become significantly higher than male life expectancy) to natality inequality. And, worse, there is clear evidence that the traditional routes of combating gender inequality, such as the use of public policy to influence female education and female economic participation, may not, on their own, serve as a path to the eradication of natality inequality. A sharp pointer in that direction comes from the countries in East Asia that have high levels of female education and economic participation.

Compared with the biologically common ratio across the world of 95 girls being born per 100 boys, Singapore and Taiwan have 92 girls, South Korea only 88, and China a mere 86—their achievements in female empowerment notwithstanding. In fact, South Korea's overall female-male ratio for children is also a meager 88 girls per 100 boys, and China's grim ratio is 85 girls per 100 boys. In comparison, the Indian ratio of 92.7 girls per 100 boys (though lower than its previous figure of 94.5) looks far less unfavorable.

STILL, THERE ARE reasons for concern. For a start, these may be early days, and it has to be asked whether with the spread of sex-selective abortion India may catch up with—and perhaps even go beyond—Korea and China. Moreover, even now there are substantial variations within India, and the all-India average hides the fact that there are states in India where the female-male ratio for children is very much lower than the Indian average.

Even though sex-selective abortion is to some extent being used in most regions in India, there seems to be something of a social and cultural divide across India, splitting the country in two, in terms of the extent of the practice and the underlying bias against female children. Since more boys are born than girls everywhere in the world, even without sex-specific abortion, we can use as a classificatory benchmark the female-male ratio among children in advanced industrial countries. The female-male ratio among children for the zero-to-five age group is 94.8 in Germany, 95.0 in the United Kingdom, and

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95.7 in the United States. And perhaps we can sensibly pick the German ratio of 94.8 as the cut-off point below which we should suspect anti-female intervention.

The use of this dividing line produces a remarkable geographical split in India. In the states in the north and the west, the female-male ratio of children is uniformly below the benchmark figure, led by Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat (with ratios between 79.3 and 87.8), and also including the states of Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, and Bihar. The states in the east and the south, by contrast, tend to have female-male ratios that are above the benchmark line of 94.8 girls per 100 boys, such as Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Assam (each between 96.3 and 96.6), and also including Orissa, Karnataka, and the northeastern states to the east of Bangladesh.

Aside from the tiny states of Dadra and Nagar Haveli (with less than 250,000 people), which have a high female-male ratio among children despite being in the west, the one substantial exception to this adjoining division is Tamil Nadu, where the female-male ratio is just below 94—higher than the ratio of any state in the deficit list, but still just below the cut-off line (94.8) used for the partitioning. But the astonishing finding is not that one particular state is a marginal misfit. It is that the vast majority of the Indian states fall firmly into two contiguous halves, classified broadly into the north and the west on one side and the south and the east on the other. Indeed, every state in the north and the west (with the slight exception of tiny Dadra and Nagar Haveli) has strictly lower female-male ratios of children than every state in the east and the south (even Tamil Nadu fits into this classification). This is quite remarkable.

The pattern of female-male ratio of children produces a much sharper regional classification than does the female-male ratio of mortality of children, even though the two are also strongly correlated. The female-male ratio in child mortality varies, at one end, from 0.91 in West Bengal and 0.93 in Kerala, in the eastern and southern group, to 1.30 at the other end, in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh (with high ratios also in Gujarat, Bihar, and Rajasthan), in the northern and western group.

THE PATTERN OF contrast does not have any obvious economic explanation. The states with anti-female bias include rich states (Punjab and Haryana) as well as poor states (Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh), fast-growing states (Gujarat and Maharashtra) as well as states that are growth failures (Bihar and Uttar Pradesh). Also, the incidence of sex-specific abortions cannot be explained by the availability of medical resources for determining the sex of the fetus: Kerala and West Bengal in the non-deficit list have at least as many medical facilities as do the deficit states of Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, or Rajasthan. If the provision for sex-selective abortion is infrequent in Kerala or West Bengal, it is because of a low demand for those specific services, rather than any great barrier on the side of supply.

This suggests that we must inquire beyond economic resources or material prosperity or GNP growth into broad cultural and social influences. There are a variety of influences to be considered here, and the linking of these demographic features with the subject matter of social anthropology and cultural studies would certainly be very much worth doing. There is also some possible connection with politics. It has been noted in other contexts that the states in the north and the west of India generally have given much more room to religion-based sectarian politics than has the east or the south, where religion-centered parties have had very little success. Of the 197 members of the present Indian parliament from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Shiva Sena, which represent to a great extent the forces of Hindu nationalism, as many as 169 were elected from the north and the west. While it would be important to keep a close watch on the trend of sex-selective abortion everywhere in India, the fact that there are sharp divisions related to culture and politics may suggest lines of probing investigation as well as remedial action.

Gender inequality, then, has many distinct and dissimilar faces. In overcoming some of its worst manifestations, especially in mortality rates, the cultivation of women's empowerment and agency, through such means as women's education and gainful employment, has proved very effective. But in dealing with the new form of gender inequality, the injustice relating to natality, there is a need to go beyond the question of the agency of women and to look for a more critical assessment of received values. When anti-female bias in behavior (such as sex-specific abortion) reflects the hold of traditional masculinist values from which mothers themselves may not be immune, what is needed is not just freedom of action but also freedom of thought—the freedom to question and to scrutinize inherited beliefs and traditional priorities. Informed critical agency is important in combating inequality of every kind, and gender inequality is no exception. ■

The Mirror-Stage

By NICHOLAS JENKINS

Lectures on Shakespeare by W. H. Auden reconstructed and edited by Arthur Kirsch

(Princeton University Press, 398 pp., $29.95)

I.

YOU CAN IMAGINE IT. The time: the early autumn of 1946, an uncertain and anxious period ("anxiety" was a fashionable philosophical buzzword), when American citizens faced the very real possibility of a Third World War, this time largely atomic. American political and cultural circles were engaged in an open-ended, unparochial debate about ideas and goals. With 1930s-style Marxism long abandoned, New York intellectual life was inflamed with the cults of Kafka, Dostoevsky, and Kierkegaard; journals ran long essays on *The Castle* and *Notes From Underground*. The atmosphere was fevered, individualist, and cosmopolitan. The place: a lecture theater at the New School for Social Research, an intellectual enclave in the heart of Manhattan for exiled European scholars. In *Humboldt's Gift*, Charles Citrine remembers the postwar city as an internationalized place, made so partly by the

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influx of so many learned foreigners. It was, he says, a "metropolis that yearned to belong to another country."

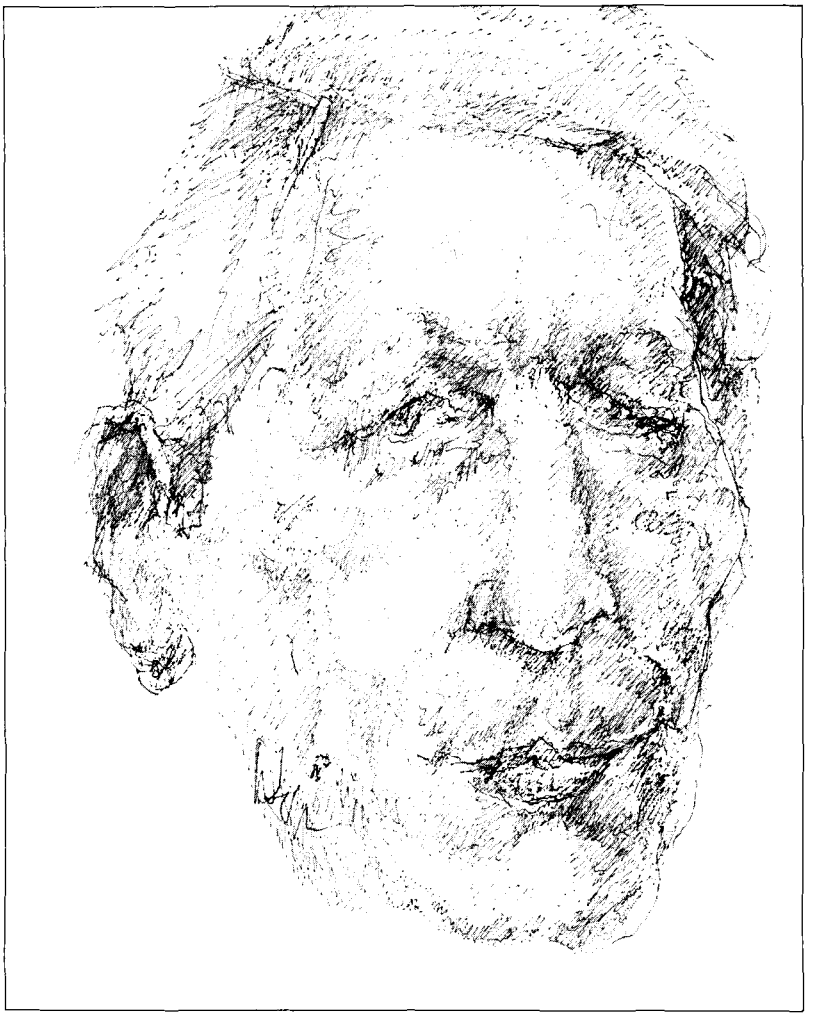
On October 2, 1946, the day Americans learn from their newspapers that Göring and ten other Nazi luminaries have been sentenced to death, five hundred people fill an auditorium at the New School. Among them are an unusually large proportion of people whose homes only a few years before were in Europe, and for whom Shakespeare's English is at best a second language. The protagonist enters through the audience: six feet tall, sandy-haired, thirty-nine years old, rather shabbily dressed ("he is the dirtiest man I have ever liked," his soon-to-be collaborator Stravinsky would say). He walks down the aisle, climbs onto the stage, and starts talking. Murmurs in the audience die out. Immediately—it must be their first conscious response, preceding awareness of the content of what he is saying—the listeners notice a plummy British accent modified (as he will put it a short while later) by the acquisition of "a good many American teeth." W. H. Auden's lectures on Shakespeare have begun.

Auden had rocketed to fame as a poet in Britain during the 1930s. By 1937, only seven years after he published his first book, two seasoned members of the British establishment, J. M. Keynes and poet laureate John Masefield, both matter-of-factly referred to Auden as a "genius," and the wild, splenetic modernist Wyndham Lewis called him, with exquisite accuracy and sarcasm, "a national institution." After Auden's controversial emigration to the United States in 1939 (he became an American citizen in 1946, a few months before giving his Shakespeare lectures), he rapidly emerged as a figure of great importance in American literary culture as well.

This was a period—how long gone does not need to be emphasized—when, as Clement Greenberg once said, "the successful poet still dominate[d] the literary and academic scene." Only Wallace Stevens, twenty-seven years Auden's senior, dominated as firmly as Auden did. This expatriate Englishman living in New York, a city filled with exiles and refugees, was among the most influential and spectacular poets in the country, working in what were then the highest and most visible (and are now among the humblest and least fashionable) literary forms: poetry and criticism.

Auden's was not just a name with cachet in a cultural context. Only a few days before he delivered a brilliant lecture at the New School in April, 1947 on the middle-aged eroticism of *Antony and Cleopatra*, the play that he said he would keep if he had to burn all of Shakespeare's works but one, Walter Winchell's gossip column, syndicated in two thousand newspapers across the country, mentioned a rumor about Auden's own almost middle-aged love life: that he was planning to marry his girlfriend Rhoda Jaffe. (This straight interlude in a largely homosexual existence eventually came to nothing.) O brave old world that had people in Flagstaff and Tuscaloosa reading about the latest affair of a New York poet! A member of the New School staff, commenting on the high enrollment for Auden's course, said that it was almost as if Shakespeare were giving lectures on Auden.

In a sense he was. "A major poet is always willing to risk failure, to look for a new rhetoric," Auden declared during his class on *The Taming of the Shrew*. And there is no doubt that this is what he saw himself doing in the period when he spoke on Shakespeare. "The problem of every man and writer is at all times essentially the same," he would later observe, "namely, first to learn to be himself and then to learn to be not himself." For Auden, learning how "to be not himself" and how to find a "new rhetoric" were both intimately tied up with reflecting on Shakespeare. It was if the playwright's works were a huge, multifaceted mirror, created by someone who remained mysteriously indefinite and could therefore be imagined as being like whomever you chose, even like a yourself-to-be.



W. H. Auden by David Schorr for The New Republic

In fact, there are moments when Shakespeare as described in these lectures becomes an almost exact double of Auden's latest version of himself. Consider, for instance, these characteristically friendly but needling remarks in 1947, from the last lecture to the class. Auden's own very serious insouciance and polemical modesty rise right to the surface of some wholly speculative comments about the Bard:

> In the early minor sonnets he talks about his works outlasting time. But increasingly he suggests, as Theseus does in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that "The best in this kind are but shadows," that art is rather a bore. He spends his life at it, but he doesn't think it's very important.... I find Shakespeare particularly appealing in his attitude towards his work. There's something a little irritating in the determination of the very greatest artists, like Dante, Joyce, Milton, to create masterpieces and to think themselves important. To be able to devote one's life to art without forgetting that art is frivolous is a tremendous achievement of personal character. Shakespeare never takes himself too seriously.

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When art takes itself too seriously,
it tries to do more than it can.

About a month later Auden, an impassioned music lover, wrote a poem, "Music Is International," that faithfully echoed such sentiments. Praising "these halcyon structures" of composed sound that are "useful as structures go," Auden warned hyperbolically that musical masterpieces are still not "to be confused / With anything really important / Like feeding strays or looking pleased when caught / By a bore or a hideola." (According to Dorothy J. Farnan, "hideola" was a campy term coined by Auden's boyfriend Chester Kallman during the war. The train that Kallman was riding to his father's house at Sea Cliff, Long Island stopped at the town of Mineola. He asked a passenger what the name of the town was. When told, Kallman exclaimed histrionically: "What a hideous town.... It ought to be called Hideola, not Mineola." Farnan says that from then on, in the Auden-Kallman circle, "the new adjective, hideola, was used to denote people, places, or things that Chester considered distasteful or ugly.") The chance to think out loud about these personal artistic searches for a new style and a new set of values while confronting the work of England's greatest writer must explain why Auden invested his ideas and his passions so fully in what were, after all, money-making talks. "In one sense the artist is always unlocking his heart," Auden said, virtually giving the game away to his class, "in another he is always dramatic."

FROM OCTOBER 2, 1946, to May 14, 1947, he appeared thirty times, "boom[ing] away," as he put it, to large audiences every Wednesday evening. He spoke on Shakespeare's plays "in chronological order," with an additional lecture on the newly fashionable sonnets. But although Auden took the stage thirty times during the course, there were only twenty-nine lectures. At the class's first meeting in 1947, the poet—was he underprepared after the holidays? was he being heuristically irreverent?—announced that "*The Merry Wives of Windsor* is a very dull play indeed." However bad it was, though, Auden noted that the play had inspired Verdi's *Falstaff*, which is "a very great operatic masterpiece." Adding that "I have nothing to say about Shakespeare's play," he proceeded, in spite of some murmurs in the audience, to play eighteen sides of a recording of *Falstaff*, on records in the old 78 rpm format. (LPs did not go on sale until the following year.)

Although no one, perhaps not even Auden, could have known it at the time, this moment when a play (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*) was displaced by an opera (*Falstaff*) looks like an augury. Auden had written or co-written five major theatrical works in the 1930s, and at the time of the Shakespeare lectures was completing *The Age of Anxiety*, his third long dramatic poem of the 1940s. But after delivering this course at the New School, Auden never wrote anything for the non-musical stage again. So these exhaustive public soliloquies on Shakespeare—the fecund genius who, as Auden put it, at the age of forty-seven just "stops" writing—were a ghostly farewell to Auden's own engagement with drama. In November, 1947 he began his collaboration with Stravinsky on *The Rake's Progress*, a major transit point in what would become a thirty-year journey deep into the world of opera.

Robert Craft, whose own life was soon to be decisively influenced by Stravinsky (Auden was present at the first meeting between Stravinsky and Craft in Washington in 1948), attended some of these lectures. He has recently claimed that Auden spoke "impromptu from aide-mémoires." Auden apparently threw away whatever scribblings he had for each talk. But several of the students who came to the Wednesday lectures (and also to the discussion sessions that Auden held on Saturdays) took down a lot of what he said. The most important of these note-takers was a scholarly young poet named Alan Ansen, recently graduated from Harvard, who in the course of these lectures was inducted as a member of Auden's circle. (He helped carry those *Falstaff* records back to Auden's apartment in the Village.) Working from Ansen's extensive transcriptions, and splicing in notes by others, Arthur Kirsch has artfully patched together a richly circumstantial and dramatic volume that brings the bizarre, playful, haunted Auden of these years vividly to life.

Such a text, conjured from listeners' notes, recalls other famous reconstructions, such as Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, cobbled together from his students' files and posthumously published in 1916. But the more apposite parallel is with the labors of countless obsessive scholars editing the texts of Shakespeare and other Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights. Often working from the garbled recollections of cash-hungry actors, these skilled enthusiasts have gotten us as close as possible to the words of many otherwise vanished or corrupted plays. This is precisely what Kirsch, who is known primarily as a scholar of Renaissance literature, does here in his reconstruction of Auden at the New School.

II.

THE RESTORED DRAMA has three inseparable subjects: New York culture at the very start of the cold war; Auden's transformation from a young nationalist English writer into a polymathic international poet; and, of course, the unending process by which Shakespeare gets construed and reconstrued in the image of the society or individual that is reading him. Shakespeare may be, as Ben Jonson somewhat coarsely said, "for all time," but he is also a creature of every age that encounters his work.

The postwar period when these lectures were given stands in an ambiguous relation to the present day. It seems immeasurably distant in some ways—in private schools in New York boys were still playing the girls' roles in Shakespeare, just as they did in Elizabethan times—but it is nonetheless an era within living memory. And this indefiniteness is no less true of Shakespeare studies than it is of the time's politics and culture. One means of better understanding where Auden, and the period as a whole, fit into the history of Shakespearean criticism is to construct a simple synchronic map, a temporal version of the Forest of Arden, on which different generations of English-speaking Shakespeareans are located. Thus, by 1946, when Auden spoke, influential Edwardian devotees of the Bard were, like dinosaurs, dying out. A.C. Bradley, the prime exponent of "character analysis" of the plays, died in London in 1935; and the great actor-manager Harley Granville-Barker, the most influential figure in modern Shakespearean stagecraft, died during the summer of 1946 in Paris. The relatively youthful theatrical Shakespeareans of the time included the thirty-one-year-old Orson Welles, director of a sensational modern-dress *Julius Caesar* in New York in 1937, but now in Hollywood; and the thirty-nine-year-old Laurence Olivier, touring with the Old Vic in the United States. The forty-eight-year-old G. Wilson Knight, at Leeds, and the fifty-seven-year-old E.M.W. Tillyard, at Cambridge, loomed among the most prominent of living scholars.

These people were, in the narrow sense, Auden's Shakespearean contemporaries. Yet his interest in the lectures focuses consistently on topics such as sexual politics, the manipulative coldness of Prospero, Shakespeare's highly equivocal images of the Elizabethan state and British history, and the social costs of a stable political order—all unfashionable issues at the time. Auden's themes point uncannily forward to subjects that have become central to recent Shakespearean scholarship. So it

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is useful to consider also the whereabouts of some great present-day Shakespeareans when Auden was lecturing. When Auden began his course in Greenwich Village in 1946, Stephen Orgel and Anne Barton, to mention two distinguished scholars, were teenagers living in and around New York City; and when Auden ended his course the now-eminent Lisa Jardine and Stephen Greenblatt, in England and Boston respectively, were a pair of cheerful three-year-olds. Auden could have bounced them on his knee. And yet his worldly, imaginative, ambivalent, offbeat readings of Shakespeare seem to me far closer in spirit to the works of these contemporary writers than to the nostrums of "senior" scholars of 1946 such as Tillyard or Knight.

AUDEN DELIVERED HIS lectures when the political and ideological climate in the United States was stormy, obscure, and rapidly evolving. In 1949, he characterized the time as "a revolutionary age" of "unstatic and unstable societies." For all its importance, though, this remarkable period still remains elusive and shapeless, in part because it was a fluid, transforming moment on either side of which lie clearly defined, and therefore more comprehensible, eras: the Depression and the cold war. But it is precisely this menacing mutability, this sense that history might be going in any number of directions, that make the immediate postwar years so significant. World War II and its aftermath are the hinge moment of the twentieth century—with the end of the war came the collapse of the European colonial empires, the loss of European hegemony over historical developments across wide swaths of the world, and the emergence of two non-European superpowers that would determine the geopolitical balance for the next fifty years.

It is not hard to see, then, why one of the seminal concepts of the second half of the century crystallized at such a time. Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, the book that codified the idea of "paradigm shifts," was not published until 1962; but Kuhn insisted that the idea occurred to him in 1947, when he was working as a teaching assistant in one of James B. Conant's science classes at Harvard. The scholarly notion of an absolute discontinuity between two cognitive maps of the world emerged directly out of a period when major social and historical transformations were taking place. The theory is the product of its context, just as Auden's thoughts about Shakespeare are. It is also not hard to see, then, why his talks are so preoccupied with first and last things, why they seem simultaneously oriented toward the past and the future, nor why they have such a strikingly urgent tempo, full of debatable but meaningful assertions such as "man's last home is music" or "we all reach a time when the god Hercules leaves us" or "faith is essential" or (my favorite) "being forgiven is harder than being punished."

Some sense of how quickly events and ideas were moving in this period—of how much society was changing—can be gleaned from a comment that Auden made to his class in his concluding lecture on May 14, 1947. Looking back to the autumn of 1946, when the class had started, he told his audience that "it's a long time ago since the beginning of October. I and you are for better or worse, I hope for better, different people from what we were then." Surely a part of what made it such a long time was that so much had happened politically. A violent swing had occurred in American politics. In 1946 Auden gave his class a gloomy "quotation for Election Day" from *Antony and Cleopatra*: "This common body, / Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream, / Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide, / To rot itself with motion." And, sure enough, on November 5, 1946, the "common body" surged powerfully to the right: Republicans captured control of both houses of Congress, and Richard Nixon was elected to the House of Representatives, Joseph McCarthy to the Senate, and Strom Thurmond to the governorship of South Carolina.

Not just on this Election Day but throughout, the Shakespeare lectures show that Auden—one of the few leading poets of the day who voted the straight Democratic ticket—was very pessimistic about political conditions in the postwar world. Perhaps it was a reasonable and prescient attitude, given the mood of the country. Ansen noted that in the lecture on *Henry VI* "Auden quotes with pleasure [Jack] Cade's communist and anti-lawyer remarks." Elsewhere Auden talked about the enormous "radius of evil" in contemporary society, and bemoaned the country's racial divide, and voiced his opposition to capital punishment, and asserted that in postwar civilization social inequality was so aggravated that the "real differences" between people had caused justice and the law to lose touch with each other.

Why did such contemporary issues come up so regularly as Auden talked about a set of plays more than three centuries old? That Shakespeare was a highly "political" writer had seemed self-evident in the 1930s across the political spectrum. In 1937, for example, when the left-leaning Orson Welles directed the Mercury

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Theater production of *Julius Caesar* in New York, he dressed Caesar's supporters in brown-shirted uniforms and made sure that Caesar was explicitly likened to Mussolini. Brecht also drew on Shakespeare's play for his unfinished satiric novel of 1938–1939, *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar* (*The Business Affairs of Mr. Julius Caesar*).

In the 1930s, however, the extreme right in France and T. S. Eliot in England adored the message of *Coriolanus*. ("I'd leave *Coriolanus* to the French," Auden told Alan Ansen dryly. "I can't follow Eliot in his exalted opinion of the play.") And the Nazis, too, were ardent Shakespeareans. In 1936, more Shakespeare productions were staged in Germany than in the rest of the world put together, including Britain. And 1937, the year of Welles's Caesar-as-Mussolini, was also the year of Richard III-as-Goebbels, an interpretation of the play made all the more piquant because the production took place in Germany. When Göring was prime minister of Prussia and locked in a power struggle with Goebbels, the Prussian State Theater in Berlin staged a production of Shakespeare's play about the oily, club-footed, murderous king. Both the prime minister and the oily, club-footed, murderous minister of propaganda attended the opening night. As Richard's henchmen cast aside their cloaks, revealing dark shirts and party-style shoulder straps, there were gasps in the audience. Göring smiled. Goebbels pretended not to notice.

When the war began, the German regime instituted a ban on productions of all works by foreign writers, but Hitler himself intervened to make an exception in the case of Shakespeare. And during the conflict "Nordic" readings of Shakespeare abounded in the Third Reich, as Elizabethan England was routinely equated with Nazi Germany. One of Hitler's favorite films was *Fire Over England*, starring Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier as two Elizabethan lovers at the time of the Spanish Armada. (Interestingly, Hitler's main European adversary had similar tastes in entertainment: one of Churchill's favorite movies was another Leigh and Olivier escapade with nautical costumes, *Lady Hamilton*, a story about the romance between Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton that the British prime minister had personally ordered Alexander Korda to the United States to direct.) Indeed, even up to the *Götterdämmerung* in 1945, Shakespeare remained Nazi Germany's favorite dramatist.

But the state in which Shakespeare's work was most closely identified with a national purpose and a contemporary set of political attitudes was, not surprisingly, Britain. Shakespeare as the inspired prophet and defender of Englishness became an increasingly familiar figure in Britain in the later 1930s. British political life at the time, dominated by men who long before had imbibed a confident, burdened, late-Victorian Shakespeare at school, was saturated with tendentious, self-justificatory quotations from the Swan of Avon's plays. Neville Chamberlain cited some rather effete prose from Hotspur in *Henry IV* before setting off to appease Hitler in Munich in 1938: "Out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety." And only a few months later, in February 1939, Chamberlain, now backing away from his earlier supine policies, sternly cited poetry from *King John*: "This England never did, nor never shall / Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror." (It is an oscillation that brings to mind Richard III's speech in *Henry VI*: "I can ... wet my cheeks with artificial tears, / And frame my face to all occasions.")

With the outbreak of war in September, 1939, Shakespeare, who was Churchill's favorite author and the writer from whom he borrowed most frequently in his wartime speeches, assumed an even more prominent position in English political discourse. Some scholars self-consciously joined their learned studies to the war effort. G. Wilson Knight, who had become famous in the 1930s for arguing that individual parts of a play were meaningful only insofar as they were integrated into a larger artistic pattern or totality, began to extrapolate from his vision of literary wholes toward an ideal of political and social wholes. In Shakespeare, Knight argued, the country had a "national prophet if ever there was one, concerned deeply with the royal soul of England."

Others were less explicit about interpreting Shakespeare in terms of the war and Churchillian nationalism, but it is suggestive that some of the most influential Shakespearean criticism of the twentieth century stems from precisely this period, and it is obvious that this literary work bears traces of the battered, militarized, necessarily undemocratic state in which it was produced. E. M. W. Tillyard's stability-obsessed book *The Elizabethan World Picture*, with its vision of coordinated concentric spheres of order in Renaissance society and thought, was published in 1943. And in 1944 Tillyard brought out *Shakespeare's History Plays*, a volume in which an ideal of national unity and uniformity is deeply embedded. Tillyard laid special stress on the two *Henry IV* plays, which he saw as dramatizing a triumph of Prince (later King) Henry's hard-hearted pragmatism and militant patriotism over the anarchy, hedonism, and social irregularity represented by the prince's onetime companion Falstaff. In his discussion of the subordination of Falstaff, Tillyard remarked that Britain had been "schooled by recent events" in the need for a stable and strong social order such as the one that Henry offered.

The real significance of Auden's reading of Shakespeare in polyglot, postwar New York as a detached writer and not an engaged one, as a poetic skeptic and not a patriot-in-verse, emerges only against the background of contemporary views such as these. And a consideration of these views shows just how momentous the stakes were in this literary battle of ideas. In contrast to wartime British encomia on Shakespearean order and integration, Auden posits a Shakespeare who is fascinated by disorder, by the social "outsider"—as with Shylock, Othello, or Caliban (to whom Auden himself had given lengthy voice in his recent poem "The Sea and the Mirror," a poetic "commentary" on *The Tempest*)—and by actions that cannot be explained on practical grounds. Given such characters and such events in the plays, Auden insists that Shakespeare is not the celebrant of total unity, as the nationalist bardolaters in Britain were claiming. "Unlike many of even the greatest artists," he maintained, "Shakespeare is not interested in completely flawless wholes." In the context of 1946, nothing could have made Shakespeare sound more adversarial and un-English.

III.

But these were not just lectures limning the contours of an un-English Shakespeare. They parabolically address their author's own work and cultural position, and so they are also, and perhaps most profoundly, about a deracinated, adversarial, un-English Auden. In 1946, Auden told Edmund Wilson that he was in the United States because the country was "the only place where it is possible to be truly international." If British commentators saw Hal justifiably crushing the person of Falstaff to strengthen the English state, Auden could not have helped but glimpse in Falstaff's fate an allegory of his own literary reputation in wartime Britain. By the spring of 1940, he—along with many other English artists resident in North America, from Gracie Fields to Alfred Hitchcock to Christopher Isherwood—had become the target of right-wing satirists and opinion writers in Britain.

The attacks on Auden continued

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throughout the war. In 1945 Auden told Isherwood, with some amusement, that a literary pundit and former friend in Britain had published a long complaint about "Auden's later, so regrettable, transatlantic development." It was, Auden said, "like crossing the name of an erring daughter out of the family Bible." His nonchalance perhaps hid a more equivocal reaction. The following year at the New School, his discussion of the moment in *Julius Caesar* when "Cinna the poet," more cinnaed against than cinning, is mistakenly torn apart by a Roman mob takes up quite a lot of space for such a small scene.

BUT THE ANTI-NATIONALIST, anti-patriotic natures of Auden's Shakespeare and Shakespeare's Auden come out most clearly in a comparison of the careers of the two greatest Shakespeareans born in England in 1907, Auden and Olivier. Really, it is almost like reading a parable about a fatal split between twin brothers. Both Auden and Olivier had enjoyed spectacular early successes in Britain in the 1930s. When war broke out in 1939, both were in the United States, albeit in rather different circumstances. Auden spent the Labor Day weekend before war was declared in "great agony of spirits" in New Jersey, at a small summer house rented by Kallman's father. There he wrote "September 1, 1939," one of his tensest and most despairing poems. By contrast, as the European world slipped into the abyss, Olivier was on a luxury yacht sailing to Catalina Island with Douglas Fairbanks Jr., David Niven, and several other English actors. After hearing the news of war on the radio, Fairbanks opened a bottle of champagne. There were toasts all day. Niven went waterskiing in his dinner jacket, and Olivier hurtled off drunk in a speedboat, only to be mistaken by annoyed yachtsmen for Ronald Colman.

Both Auden and Olivier stayed in the States as the early stages of the conflict in Europe unfolded. And by the summer of 1940, both men were being vilified in the British press for not being directly involved in the war. Partly in response, Olivier announced in the summer of 1940 that he was coming back to Britain soon. London newspapers greeted the information with salvoes such as "Thanks, But No Thanks: We have gotten along very well without the Mr. Oliviers so far, and we can do without them now, thank you very much." The man who would shortly make a rousingly patriotic film of *Henry V* was outraged, and alarmed.

By this time, Auden had decided to stay in the United States come what may, because "America may break one completely, but the best of which one is capable is more likely to be drawn out of one here than anywhere else." Olivier returned to Britain in early 1941 and was quickly assigned to propaganda work. Indeed, he soon became one of Britain's most precious cultural assets and a favorite of the theatrically self-conscious Churchill. On one occasion the actor and the prime minister literally spoke in perfect synchronization: in September, 1944, when Olivier was on stage in London as Richard III, he could hear Churchill's voice in the audience whispering Richard's lines in unison with him.

MEANWHILE AUDEN BECAME more and more of a pariah in Britain, a rather Hamlet-like man who just would not do his patriotic duty. In the summer of 1941, the *New Statesman* commented on Auden's poem "At the Grave of Henry James" by sneering that "the only thing in common between Henry James and Auden is that they both changed nationalities because of American neutrality." And lumbering jingles such as the following one became quite common in British newspapers during the early stages of the war: "Said Mr. Isherwood / If I joined the milisherwood / You, Mr. Auden, / Be an Air-Raid Warden."

In 1944, the year that Auden published his explicitly non-participatory "The Sea and the Mirror" using the characters from *The Tempest*, Olivier, who in 1937 had walked through an Old Vic performance in the role of Henry V out of dislike for the character's jingoism, created the classic example of British nationalist Shakespeare. Exploiting—or inventing—the links between one moment in the history of English war-making and another, Olivier sensitively realized how much contemporary political rhetoric was molded by Shakespeare's language, how politically effective Shakespeare could be. Churchill's famous "few" speech, for instance, about the Royal Air Force after the Battle of Britain—"never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few"—borrowed explicitly from Henry V's emotional description of the exhausted remnants of the English army at Agincourt as "we few, we happy few." (Today the Battle of Britain Memorial Window in Westminster Abbey, not far from Churchill's body in the abbey's nave, has Henry V's words inscribed on it.)

Of course, to make it acceptably uplifting, Olivier had to omit a lot of inconvenient and disquieting detail from Shakespeare's play in the script of his *Henry V*, which he shot partly in Britain and partly in Ireland. (Most of the heroic English longbowmen were played by Irish laborers, who were available as extras owing to Ireland's wartime neutrality.) As one scholar has commented, "Gone are the English traitors, the slaughtered French prisoners, the talk about maiden cities attending Katherine's wedding. Gone are Pistol's ignominy in battle, Bardolph's death by hanging (and Henry's approval of the execution); absent also is the King's threat to level Harfleur and rape its women unless the town surrenders."

Olivier employed a trowel as well as a knife, adding a great deal to Shakespeare. The film's longest, most famous, and most "realistic" sequence, which has no source in Shakespeare, is the epically disastrous charge of the French knights against the outnumbered British archers at Agincourt. The enemy knights on their massive steeds glide through the air toward the ragged British lines of defense like helmeted pilots swooping across the Channel in fighter planes, and they are then repulsed on the very brink of the English position. Olivier also turned Henry's post-battle wooing of the French princess Katherine into a sugary contribution to the Anglo-French alliance, ending with a close-up of the lovers' entwined hands (each is wearing a signet ring with the insignia of their country emblazoned on it). At the New School in 1946, the same year that *Henry V* was released to huge acclaim in the United States, Auden called

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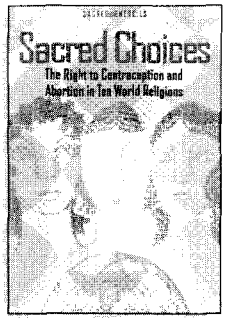

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this part of the play, which Olivier made his romantic set piece, "the most brutal scene in Shakespeare.... It is cold and calculated, and most shocking is Henry's certainty of success.... As he himself tells her dryly, he will die—but certainly not for her."

As if to confirm his distance from British national pieties and heroes (such as the Churchillian Shakespeare), Auden also attacked in print the other main icon of wartime literary nationalism, Alfred Tennyson. In 1946, now an American citizen, he published in England an edition of Tennyson's poems, in which he asserted that Tennyson was "undoubtedly the stupidest" of English poets. The result was, predictably, more controversy. ("They didn't stop to think that if I didn't like Tennyson I shouldn't have bothered to write an introduction at all," Auden grumbled to his student Ansen.) In May, 1947, on the day of a Saturday discussion class on *The Tempest* with his New School students, Auden wrote nervously to a friend in Britain that "I gather I became Public Cultural Enemy No. 1 over the Tennyson preface." That same year, Olivier, the disaffiliated days of 1939 and 1940 now long forgotten, was made Public Cultural Hero No. 1, receiving a special Oscar for *Henry V* from Hollywood and from the nearest British equivalent, Buckingham Palace, a knighthood. Inelegantly adapting Churchill, you might say that never in the field of Shakespeare was such distance opened between two contemporaries so dramatically.

I DO NOT mean to cavil puritanically about the adaptability of a great actor; but in the end Auden actually saw more of the anti-chivalric realities of modern war than the boosterish Olivier did. Having been refused entry into the U.S. Armed Services in 1942 on account of his homosexuality (it was the first time in history that the military had actively screened recruits for sexual orientation), Auden eventually went to Germany in the spring of 1945 with the United States Strategic Bombing Survey. There, in the anarchic last months of the war, he met people who had been in the camps, wrote a long report on the July 20 conspiracy against Hitler based on interviews with survivors, and witnessed first-hand the human suffering and the total infrastructural devastation caused by the carpet bombing of cities.

But ultimately more important than these historical and biographical details is the unshowy but intransigent example that Auden set by refusing to identify his art with any state cause, "justified," "noble," or otherwise. However memorable Olivier was on stage or screen, it now seems obvious that such a histrionic talent (in the words of "Music Is International") is not to be "confused / With anything really important"—such as, say, the task of distinguishing between the liberations of literature and the assertions of patriotic or ethnic rootedness. Nor is it difficult to fathom, especially in our own age of resurgent nationalisms and militant separatisms, whose career—polycentric, self-reflexive, open-ended—is the more inspiring and relevant.

Nationalism almost always seems like a phenomenon that happens somewhere else, somewhere far from home. But it is not only a social disease of the Balkans or the Congo. Variants of the same mentality—variants less immediately lethal, to be sure, but just as mystificatory and dulling—haunt even the apparently tranquil and enlightened precincts of academic study. For example, much of the huge edifice of contemporary literary criticism has been raised on a largely occluded foundation of late-nineteenth-century nationalist historiography. One might ponder a minor consequence of that fact: although Auden was an American citizen for more than half his life, wore an American army uniform at the end of World War II, won the Pulitzer Prize, and was one of the resident literary titans of New York for more than thirty years, not a single poem of his is included in the two-thousand-odd pages of the Library of America's recent anthology of twentieth-century "American" poetry. But perhaps there is a perverse kind of justice in this act of exclusion. For one of the characteristics of Auden's writing that will eventually seem most significant and prophetic is its transcultural, deracinated internationalism, its being neither fully inside nor fully outside monolithic categories of belonging such as "English" or "American."

THE SHADOWS OF modern totalitarian war (recently concluded and shortly expected) lie across almost everything that Auden said in his lectures at the New School in 1946–1947. The opening sentence of the *Merchant of Venice* lecture, one of the best in the series, reads: "With memories of the horrors of the last ten years and forebodings about anti-Semitism, it is difficult to look objectively at a play in which the villain is a Jew." Another example of the historical moment suffusing and enriching Auden's reading of Shakespeare came in his lecture on October 16, 1946, about *Richard III*. That morning *The New York Times* had announced in gigantic type the suicide the night before of Göring (the man who in 1937 had had *Richard III* staged to embarrass the now-dead Goebbels), and the deliberately non-honorific, one-by-one hanging a few hours later of the other war criminals convicted at Nuremberg. It was an immensely important event, especially for people who had lost someone in the European theater of operations or in the camps, and for those refugees who had fled the Continent and were present at the New School for Auden's class. It is impossible to imagine, then, that feelings about this news did not resurface in refracted form in the minds of the audience that evening, blurring the line between art and history as they listened to Auden's analysis of the "character of a villain," bolstered by analogies such as this one: "Richard III's monologue is not unlike Adolf Hitler's speech to his General Staff on August 23, 1939, in its utter lack of self-deception."

IF THE PAST stretched like a chilling shadow across Shakespeare's work as Auden talked about it in 1946, so did his grim "forebodings" about the future, just as these fears extended across Auden's own poetry of the period. In June, 1946, a few months before he began his Shakespeare course, he had recited his Phi Beta Kappa poem, "Under Which Lyre," during Harvard's commencement ceremonies, a celebration specially focused on some of the country's highest military and administrative elites. It is a poem that shows Auden at his wittiest and most verbally adroit, offering a devastatingly disillusioned description of the postwar world camouflaged as a piece of self-deprecating, technically conservative light verse.

The poem begins with a stagy show of mock innocence about the universities' war-forged links with the federal government: "Professors back from secret missions, / Resume their proper eruditions." But, deliberately unconvincing assertions like this to the contrary, the Armed Forces were very much present in Harvard Yard in 1946. At this event, known as the "Victory Commencement," the university awarded honorary degrees to six of the country's top service leaders, including Eisenhower, MacArthur, Nimitz, and Marshall. And when Auden read out his poem he shared the stage with the university orator Byron Price, until very recently wartime director of censorship and now—imagine—the vice president of the Motion Picture Producers' Association. (Price orated to the graduates about how "'we the people'" must "set our course resolutely again toward national greatness.")

At the center of Auden's Harvard poem is a description of the ongoing "other war" between "those who follow / Precocious Hermes all the way / And those who without qualms obey / Pompous Apollo." That war is "Brutal like all Olympic games, /

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Though fought with smiles and Christian names" and—the following adjective is heavily loaded—"less dramatic." Still, this "dialectic strife between / The civil gods is just as mean, / And more fanatic." The marginal sons of Hermes, among whom Auden numbers himself, are an anarchic and charming group, devoted to play rather than to serious work. By contrast, their enemies, "Apollo's children," many of whom were also present at Harvard for commencement ceremonies that week, are devoted to power; they are organizers and administrators. Apollo, Auden daringly declared to an audience full of veterans of the fight against the Axis powers, is "welcome to the throne, / Fasces and falcons." But his ambitions do not stop there. When he "occupies a college / Truth is replaced by Useful Knowledge." And he wants still more: domination of the book reviews, Broadway, broadcasting. "His common-sense in secret schemes / To rule the heart; / Unable to invent the lyre / Creates with simulated fire / Official art."

"Under Which Lyre" wittily admitted the bleakness of the outlook for the sons of Hermes. Still, there could be no surrender: "Related by antithesis, / A compromise between us is / Impossible," Auden declared in front of the former chief censor. "Respect perhaps but friendship never." And he elaborated the difference between the rival camps by eternally opposing the two key characters from the *Henry IV* cycle, so important to British criticism of Shakespeare at the time: "Falstaff the fool confronts forever / The prig Prince Hal."

Auden's poem to the graduating class at Harvard that day ended with a "Hermetic Decalogue," survival instructions for the beleaguered Hermetic forces:

> Thou shalt not do as the dean pleases,
> Thou shalt not write thy doctor's thesis
> On education,
> Thou shalt not worship projects nor
> Shalt thou or thine bow down before
> Administration.
>
> Thou shalt not answer questionnaires
> Or quizzes upon World-Affairs,
> Nor with compliance
> Take any test. Thou shalt not sit
> With statisticians nor commit
> A social science....
>
> Thou shalt not live within thy means
> Nor on plain water and raw greens.
> If thou must choose
> Between the chances, choose the odd;
> Read *The New Yorker*, trust in God;
> And take short views.

At a gathering with such a heavy sense of military and political responsibility for the postwar world, this may have seemed to some listeners like just a piece of genial naughtiness. But these breezy verses carried a strong political message. In 1946, Auden may have worn his art proudly on his sleeve, but he had plenty that was socially challenging up it. The advisability of taking "short views" was poignantly pertinent to the time. On April 12, 1947, as he was asking in one of his Saturday sessions on *Hamlet* if there was a student with a Mississippi accent present "to play the gravedigger," one of the note-takers remarked that the group heard "planes overhead." Auden joked uneasily with his students: "Has the war begun?" Short views might well have seemed the only realistic views on offer.

Taken together, Auden's Harvard Phi Beta Kappa poem in the summer of 1946 and his New School lectures in the autumn demonstrate how interrelated Auden's perspectives on contemporary politics and on Shakespeare really were, and why this volume is so significant. Harvard's president in 1946 was James B. Conant. A poison-gas scientist in World War I, Conant had been the director of the National Defense Research Committee, supervising the construction of the atomic bomb during World War II, and a member of the very small "Interim Committee" that had advised Truman on the use of the atomic bomb. Continuing his involvement with epochal bureaucratic projects when the war ended, Conant was also one of the most important advocates of the shift to "Big Science," or vast government-funded projects that involved hundreds, perhaps thousands, of researchers.

After one of his Shakespeare classes that autumn, Auden commented to Ansen: "When I was delivering my Phi Beta Kappa poem in Cambridge, I met Conant for about five minutes. 'This is the real enemy,' I thought to myself. And I'm sure he had the same impression about me. He is the real Prince Hal and gives the notion of sheer naked power." And Auden added: "You know, I should like to ask him whether he was the one that made the final decision to drop the atomic bomb." In fact, this was a question that, on a public stage and almost within earshot of Harvard's Prince Hal, Auden's poem had obliquely asked. Perhaps that was why the relation between a ruthless Shakespearean sovereign and contemporary managerial mandarins stuck in Auden's mind. Talking about *Henry IV* at the New School, Auden declared that "Hal and Falstaff are eternal antitypes, sworn foes. Hal is the type who becomes a college president, a government head, etc." Then he said, with unusual vehemence: "And one hates their guts."

IV.

Auden's lectures on Shakespeare were not only about politics, of course, even though the contemporary debates seem to surface in almost every paragraph of these fertile monologues. Wonderful, strange, and provocative passages crop up everywhere, on subjects as unexpected as fatness ("After Falstaff is gone, Hal becomes a formal public figure, and his style becomes fat, like Falstaff's stomach. Falstaff's style is short-winded and good. Hal's style is all fat, no muscle—the man is swallowed up in the office, and we have no interest in him"); opera; money; "the importance of boredom"; and male beauty in Shakespeare ("What does the particular idea of a handsome young man mean? This particular beauty is very evanescent and so comes to stand for the importance of the irrevocable moment ... from a sexual point of view, the looks of a man is a biological luxury and so [he] can stand as a symbol of the beauty of art because both are unrelated to anything, they are gratuitous").

Also everywhere evident is Auden's professional obsession with language. "If a writer doesn't love language," he told his audience, "he isn't even a minor poet." In 1940, he had insisted that in "lyric writing what matters more than anything else, more than subject-matter or wisdom, is diction." And the notes on the Saturday sessions, when Auden and students taking the course for credit explored the diction of *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* in minute detail, are a remarkable demonstration of Auden's extraordinarily sensitive responses to the linguistic texture of poetry. Even here, though, the smallest matters consistently return Auden to larger themes.

Consider his comments on the last scene in the first act of *Hamlet*, when the hero hears the Ghost of his father moving around underneath the stage on which Hamlet and his companions stand. After the Ghost insists that the companions should do what Hamlet asks and swear an oath of silence about the night's events, Hamlet cries out elatedly: "Art thou there, truepenny?" A rummage in my university bookstore indicates that none of the widely available contemporary paperback editions of the play glosses the strange word "truepenny" as meaning anything but "trusty or good fellow." But Auden, from childhood a devotee of books on mining (in the summer of 1947 he had an ordnance-survey map of the British lead-mining districts of Cumberland and Heysham hanging on the wall of his Fire Island shack), pointed out to his class that the term "truepenny" derives from mining jargon.

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"Truepenny," he instructed, means a "sign that there's metal in the earth." This makes sense of Hamlet's wonder over what is hidden beneath him at that moment—he has struck, as it were, supernatural gold—and it reveals how the word "truepenny" ignites a chain of references to soil and the hidden contents of the ground. In Shakespeare's following lines, words such as "cellarage," "ground," "old mole," and "earth" all appear. And then you realize that this is why Hamlet exclaims: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Auden's comment on "truepenny" signals just how literally Hamlet means that preposition to be taken: there are more things in heaven and *in* earth. Hamlet also calls the Ghost a "worthy pioner," and Auden remarked to his students that this, too, refers to activities occurring, again literally, below ground. He glossed "pioner" as coming from the Latin "*pedonem*—foot soldier" and related to "fortification forces, engineers." Thus, he said, the Ghost's disruptive activities, like a sapper's, are metaphorically to do with "underground undermining, a pioneer undermines [old] ideas." (At the time he was considering writing a book of poetry about mining to be called *Underground Life*.)

Auden's lectures on Shakespeare, miraculously speaking to us from another world, are crammed with such fine local illuminations, sparks of wit, suggestive pieces of poetic fancy. There have been many outstanding twentieth-century poets who were also dedicated Shakespeareans, including Eliot, Empson, and Berryman. Auden's lectures seem to me generally more interesting than their essays because they are less conventional, just as learned, and more poetic. But we only really come to terms with their significance by listening for the subterranean hints and subtexts that reverberate in them.

In spirited and zestful terms, this voice from beyond the grave insists on Shakespeare's relevance to a real historical moment in the United States and a real historical role for the writer of the time. Like the Ghost of Hamlet's father, here was a poet intent on articulating important, unpopular truths. Brought back from the grave in these lectures, this worthy lyric pioneer moves, like the unsettled Ghost, in underground ways to undermine old ideas—about Shakespeare, about national cultures, about himself. Sometimes, unprompted, I catch myself wondering whether we shall ever "see his like again." ■

Wild Wishes

By CHRISTINE STANSELL

Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life by Janet M. Todd

(Columbia University Press, 544 pp., $29.95)

Her Own Woman: The Life of Mary Wollstonecraft by Diane Jacobs

(Simon and Schuster, 352 pp., $28)

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT'S life is a story of wresting the unlikeliest of selves out of awesomely obdurate materials. She declared herself a working writer in the 1790s, when women writers scarcely existed in England, and she made herself a women's rights intellectual at a moment when those politics did not exist at all. Searching for passion in unlikely places, she skirted the far reaches of sexual respectability, but talent and tenacious self-esteem kept her from tumbling into the *demi-monde*. Her defiance of much that was ordained for women resulted from, and also exacerbated, spectacular inner conflicts that have fascinated both admirers and detractors ever since her death in childbirth in 1796.

A fervent advocate of the idea that women need to disentangle their own sense of worth from male approval, Wollstonecraft twice tried to kill herself after the man she adored left her. She crafted a new public role as intellectual champion of her sex, but she did not much like other women, and she always held up a male standard of virtue to emulate. Hers was a wobbling, tightrope-walking endeavor, but it led to a substantial body of work and to a fully realized, if tragically shortened, life. These paradoxes have made her a heroine of modern feminism, a woman who lived before her time: she seems to jump from the 1790s right into the twentieth century, "where she would perhaps have felt more at home," as one biographer has maintained.

But would she really have? The picture of Wollstonecraft as the pioneer certainly makes her accessible, an object of easy identification: a touch self-defeating but pleasantly free-spirited, determined to snag for herself both love and worldly distinction. We know the type, don't we? And easy recognition makes for easy reading: this is evident in Diane Jacobs's book, which portrays Wollstonecraft as an exemplar in a contemporary mode, primed to life as a great adventure. What this perspective loses is a more full-blooded historical Wollstonecraft, the bristling bluestocking whom one might not find too likable, after all.

Reading Janet Todd's life of Wollstonecraft, by contrast, you cannot help but notice that—as opposed to some of her feminist successors, such as Margaret Fuller or Elizabeth Cady Stanton—the highest estimations of Wollstonecraft came from people who never knew her. Todd's book provides an entirely historical Wollstonecraft, who profited from the windfalls of her times even as she tried, unsuccessfully, to evade the liabilities. But it is an oddly sour book, as if protracted acquaintance with such a difficult woman was too much for the writer, as it was for so many who knew Wollstonecraft firsthand.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT came to distinction from socially unpromising and emotionally barren beginnings. Born in London in 1759, she was the oldest daughter in a family of seven children, presided over by a weak mother and a bullying, drunken father, a once-prosperous commoner who dragged his brood around England failing at one scheme after another and dribbling away a substantial inheritance. Wollstonecraft determined when she was nineteen to leave home and to earn her own living. Polite society viewed paid work for

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respectable women with horror, a variant of the fate worse than death. The choices for women, accordingly, were cruelly limited: governessing, teaching grammar school, serving as a lady's companion, and (at worst) seamstressing. Wollstonecraft would try them all over the next ten years, beginning with a stint as a companion to a widow in Bath. There she sat at the edges of the drawing rooms and the ballrooms of the glittering seaside resort, watching the cutthroat courting rituals and drudging through the small talk that was the lot of a lady's companion.

Debilitating domestic crises that required Wollstonecraft's attention mingled with penurious and humiliating jobs. She tended her mother in a dreadful, drawn-out death. She spirited her sister away in a carriage from a husband she did not love. She undertook an arduous sea voyage to Lisbon to care for her dearest friend in childbirth, and mother and baby died a few days after she arrived. To earn her living, she sewed, supervised a day school, and worked as a governess for a family of Anglo-Irish peers, in which the mother, the sporting Lady Kingsborough, displayed a clear preference for her pack of dogs over her many children. These difficulties did not create a noble character. Endowed with a sense of tremendous consequence denied by a world that insisted on viewing her as "a very poor creature," she was a sulky, self-inflated girl who turned into a depressed and self-righteous young woman.

But somewhere in her Pilgrim's Progress through the trials of woman, Wollstonecraft hit on the idea of being a writer. In 1787, a London publisher and bookseller named Joseph Johnson published a tract that she sent him on female education. When Lady Kingsborough fired her, she showed up on his doorstep, the manuscript of a new novel in hand. "I am going to be the first of a new genus," Wollstonecraft bragged to her sisters, who were themselves stuck in governessing jobs. "I am not born to tread in the beaten track—the peculiar bent of my nature pushes me on." She exaggerated, with a young person's bravado, about being the "first of a new genus," for she knew about Catharine Macaulay, the celebrated liberal historian, and most likely about the one or two other bluestockings whose names appeared in the reviews. As for her claim about her antipathy to the beaten track: there she took the precise measure of her nature.

Johnson—kind, encouraging, generous with money—took her into his fold. Wollstonecraft took rooms close by, an unmarried lady in the extraordinary situation of living alone under the protection of an unmarried man. She briskly shouldered the heavy work of a freelance writer: a steady round of translations, book reviews, and articles for Johnson's *Analytical Review*. She became a regular at his dinners for his circle of radical friends, a distinguished, shabby group that included Tom Paine, William Blake, the chemist Joseph Priestley, the artist Henry Fuseli, and the philosopher William Godwin. "I succeed beyond my most sanguine hopes," she exulted to an old friend.

Professional success filled her with confidence that love, too, might be found off the beaten track, where lurked the older Fuseli, newly married, a louche character who dabbled in pornographic engravings alongside his illustrations of Milton. He encouraged Wollstonecraft's infatuation without reciprocating. When Wollstonecraft proposed that she move in with Fuseli and his bride to live as his "spiritual partner," the situation exploded. Mrs. Fuseli banished her from the house, and Fuseli turned away.

Meanwhile there was the French Revolution. Wollstonecraft's elation in her own unlikely success and the unhinged bid for Fuseli were of a piece with the conviction of radicals in these early days that what had been unthinkable was now possible. They were all keyed to a pitch to news from Paris. In 1790, Wollstonecraft compressed her own excitement into a defense of the revolution, called *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, dashed off as a riposte to Edmund Burke's attack published a month earlier. Johnson's friends were cool to the book; Paine's *Rights of Man*, which appeared several months later, would be a more authoritative elaboration of their ideas. But Catharine Macaulay replied with approbation and delight—in Wollstonecraft's forceful exposition of ideas that she held dear, and in the fact that the book was written by a woman, "and thus to see my opinion of the powers and talents of the sex in your pen so early verified." Macaulay invited her to correspond and proferred friendship. It would be the only time in her life that Wollstonecraft, the child of a critical, querulous mother and always the protégée of established men, would garner the care and the interest of a powerful older woman.

She was still an arriviste and an outsider, but she had made a place for herself. The mixture of humiliation at the hands of Fuseli and recognition from readers and fellow writers helped to crystallize an iconoclastic identity that had been of necessity suppressed in her search for a viable life. Now, having voiced unusual thoughts shared by many around her, she could articulate thoughts that she shared with just about no one. The result was *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which appeared in 1792. It was the first full-scale brief for women's rights in history.

True, the book did not come out of nowhere. Macaulay had just published a volume advocating reform in girls' education, thus advancing the proposal that Wollstonecraft would borrow as her most concrete idea for change. But Macaulay's book was a decorously limited view of her subject: it was "education," not the "rights of woman," that she took up; and for all her endorsement of change, she remained safely within the popular genre of advice to young ladies.

Wollstonecraft's broadside was something new altogether. It was a big, swaggering book that took a no-holds-barred approach to both male "tyranny" and female ineptitude. Wollstonecraft brought to the book all that she had learned about women in her ten-year round of employments; and the resulting sketches, while pressed into the abstract vocabulary and allegorical set pieces of late-eighteenth-century Enlightenment argumentation, are not pretty. Lady Kingsborough can be spied in a reference to an unnamed "tasteless being" who would rather caress her dogs than her children. The impressions stored up in the months at Bath stoked an excoriating assault on the savage marriage market of fashionable society and the coquettes who succeeded in it. Littered with nitwits, ditherers, man-chasers, sluts, sloppy housekeepers, and unfeeling mothers, the *Vindication* is as much an exposé of women's sorry characters as it is a defense of anyone's rights.

Yet for all the hostilities to actual women embedded in it, the *Vindication*'s achievement was to announce, and then to hammer home, a startling proposition: that the revolutionary criticism of absolute power and its perfidious consequences in human character could accurately be extended to relations between men and women. The book is slapdash, repetitive, and circular, but it is genuinely powerful in its exposition of this central idea. Seemingly natural social expectations about how women should think and act, Wollstonecraft contended, were in truth born of men's despotism and women's subservience, grounded in a system of privilege as corrupt as any monarchy. No one had ever written this before. Conservatives denounced her as "a hyena in petticoats," the English equivalent of "the revolutionary harpies of France, sprung from night and hell"; Americans loved her; and British women of liberal disposition embraced her.

A celebrity now, Wollstonecraft headed to Paris. She arrived not long before Louis

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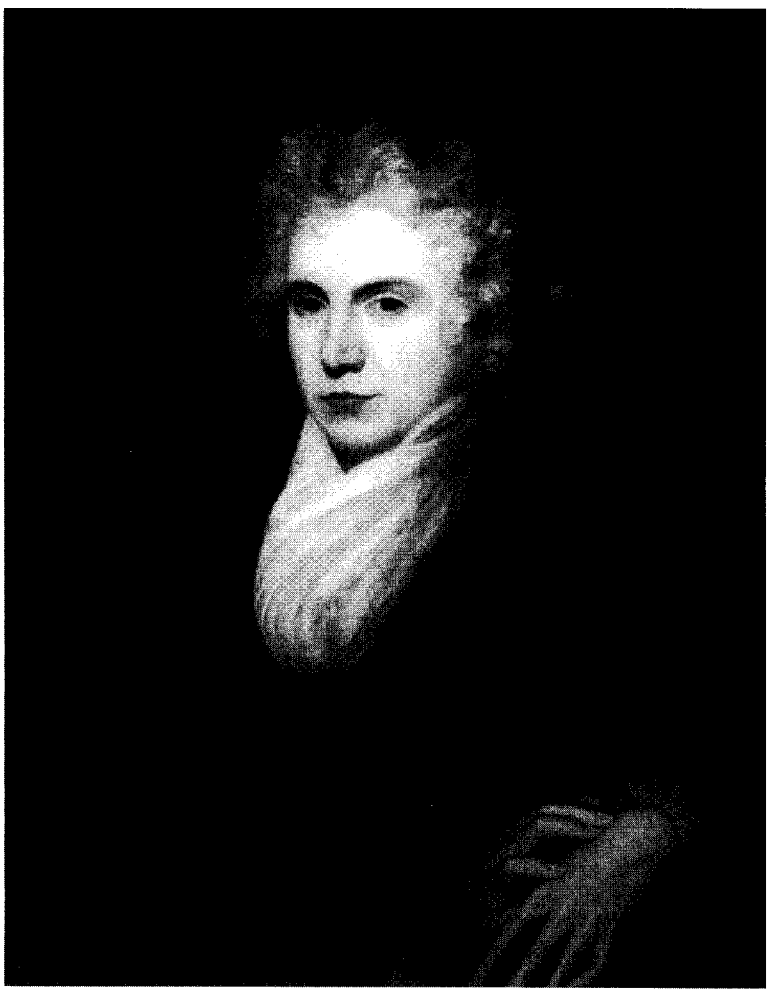
XVI was executed, knowing little French but with enough cachet to gain an entrée to salons of the moderate Girondin faction, which also harbored the revolution's leading women activists. She followed politics closely. But even as the Jacobins seized power and some Girondin acquaintances went to the guillotine, her political anguish and her sense of her own danger were overshadowed by the rapture and exasperation of a new love affair, this one a deeply sexual partnership with an American adventurer and speculator named Gilbert Imlay. Soon she was pregnant. Imlay, one of the loose fish schooling around Paris at the moment, was out to make a killing in the financial chaos fostered by terror and food shortages. A sexy, genial fellow, he did love Wollstonecraft in his way, and he seems even to have been fond of their baby, a daughter. But he was ferociously a man on the make, and once he hopped out of bed he was intent on pursuing his business deals and, probably, any willing woman who crossed his path.

But Wollstonecraft had him pegged differently, as a soul mate and a fellow traveler on the untrodden paths of life. Pregnant, enthralled, and driven by a deep compulsion to rein him in, she became obsessed, following him from one place to another, battering him with recriminations, then securing some reconciliation, only to cope with another departure—always softened by his reassurances and her need to believe them. The pattern lasted for months after the baby was born—at one point Wollstonecraft, with baby and nurse in tow, undertook a wildly wrongheaded, grueling trip through Scandinavia as his business agent to strengthen their bond. She finally ended up in London, to find him living with an actress. There she gave out. She tried to kill herself: first with laudanum, then by jumping into the Thames, this time to be saved by her petticoats, which buoyed her up, and by some boatmen who pulled her out of the water.

Wollstonecraft's temperament was shadowed, compulsive, ridden with grievances, and morose; but she was not a chronically depressed woman. Cared for by Johnson and friends and admirers, and nourished by a persistent love for her daughter Fanny, now an amazingly cheerful toddler, she recovered—to write about Paris and then about the Scandinavian trip, to go out and about in London, and to take up with another man, the ascetic philosopher William Godwin. The two had not liked each other in the early days at Johnson's—each took up too much conversational space for the other's taste. But now, according to Godwin's later account, something stirred.

"Friendship melting into love" was how he put it, memorably. In short order they set up a common life of two writers with a child, a novel domestic arrangement in the 1790s and for a long time thereafter: separate days at their desks, late afternoons *en famille*, evenings spent talking, reading, seeing friends. When Wollstonecraft became pregnant, they married. She died in childbirth in 1796. And Godwin, in an astonishing, principled act of widower's devotion, prescient in the long run but highly injurious at the time, published a memorial biography of his wife. He thereby revealed to an appalled Anglo-American world the theretofore muted facts of her passion for Imlay, her illegitimate pregnancies, and her two suicide attempts.



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Mary Wollstonecraft, 1791

Ironically, Godwin's loving tribute made Wollstonecraft a bogeyman for a hundred years. The *Vindication*, which dropped out of print as politics and culture veered rightward after the revolution, became a samizdat text of uncertain fortunes, read in old copies by a few smart, strappy girls and thoughtful women. From Maine, in 1801, one Eliza Southgate, a young woman well-educated by the standards of the day, battled to "vindicate"—her word—womankind in long epistolary debates with an arrogant male cousin, and she turned to Wollstonecraft when she needed ammunition. To be sure, as she hastened to avow, she was no disciple, and Wollstonecraft's deplorable life was certainly a comment on her writings; but then again, "I allow her to have said many things which I cannot but approve."

This was only a few years after Wollstonecraft died. Later the trail petered out. By and large, Wollstonecraft did not interest the feminists of the nineteenth century: the writing, saturated with a contempt for women-as-they-were even as the author envisioned women-as-they-might-be, was unsuited to an age that vaunted female virtues as the grounds for their citizenship, and Wollstonecraft's scandalous life was distasteful. There is no evidence that any of the abolitionist women who reinvented women's rights at the Seneca Falls Convention in New York in 1848 read the *Vindication*, except for the Philadelphia Quaker Lucretia Mott. Mott probably recommended the book to her young friend Elizabeth Cady Stanton, an avid reader of anything related to women. After the Civil War, Stanton and Susan B. Anthony published excerpts of the *Vindication* in their women's rights newspaper, but with no particular sense of import.

The exception was Margaret Fuller, whose own attempts as a single woman to break into the Transcendentalist circle equipped her to grasp the magnitude of all that Wollstonecraft took on, all that opposed her, and all that she achieved. In

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1845, in her manifesto *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Fuller rose to Wollstonecraft's defense, the first prominent writer to do so in the nineteenth century. Schooled in the European Romantics, she used a new vocabulary to cast Wollstonecraft as a gifted being, a brilliant self "rich in genius, of most tender sympathies, capable of high virtue and a chastened harmony." Such women, Fuller urged, "ought not to find themselves, by birth, in a place so narrow, that, in breaking bonds, they become outlaws"—no doubt thinking of her own case.

THIS VIEW OF an extraordinary woman tragically at odds with her times has formed modern feminist interpretations of Wollstonecraft. Twentieth-century writers, prepared to entertain the facts of Wollstonecraft's wayward loves, her defeats, her strategies of self-sabotage, and her risky choices, have created a line of luminous tributes. Some very good minds, and a few fine ones, have mulled over her complications. The anthropologist Ruth Benedict in 1917 saw her biography as "that most precious of human documents: the story of a life that achieved an idea.... For her, life had no axioms; its geometry was all experimental." The qualities that once disqualified Wollstonecraft from notable womanhood were now just the thing to turn her into an inspiration. Virginia Woolf wrote tenderly in 1932 about Wollstonecraft's spirit as not just animated but helpful: "She is alive and active, she argues and experiments, we hear her voice and trace her influence even now among the living." Today Elaine Showalter finds her central to feminism not just for her authorship of the *Vindication* but for "her Promethean reaching for the largest dimensions of womanhood." And Richard Holmes, in his meditation on the Romantics, dwells rapturously on Wollstonecraft's relations with Godwin: "Their brief union marks the beginning of a new phase of human aspiration."

Diane Jacobs's biography is Wollstonecraft lite, a concise, digestible rendering with a touch of the flavor of the genuine article. Lively and accurate, the book is a good introduction to the tradition of appreciation of Wollstonecraft as the inspiring pioneer. Jacobs generally takes her cues from Wollstonecraft's most glowing appraisals of herself, and she scants the complaints and grievances of those around her as Wollstonecraft herself did. "Ardent," Jacobs finds her repeatedly; idealism and a passion for justice prevail in her study over murkier motives. "Those who know me will suppose that I acted from principle," Wollstonecraft loftily maintained in a letter written shortly before she died; and Jacobs, in ending her book with this passage, takes Wollstonecraft at her word.

This approach pushes to the foreground those aspects of Wollstonecraft that best fit with notions of modern feminine success, of combining love and work, personal delight and public recognition. Jacobs focuses on the busy writer, who published ten books in her short career; the devoted mother, who even as she despaired for herself took care to turn her daughter over to a supremely competent nurse; and Godwin's dear wife. She takes care to locate the scattered circles of accomplished women in London and Paris whose existence assured Wollstonecraft that a thinking woman need not be alone. She dwells on Wollstonecraft's love of pleasures: of sex, of her baby, of her days spent writing, of the beauty of Paris. The brevity of the book allows Jacobs to hit the high points without having to slog through the quagmires. Of Wollstonecraft's obsessed, miserable, censorious letters to Imlay, Jacobs spares readers all but an atypically calm and detached sample.

MAKING WOLLSTONECRAFT into an inspirational figure paradoxically denies Wollstonecraft her due. Inevitably the struggles of a heroine destined for big things seem fleeting and circumstantial. Interpolating from Wollstonecraft's own re-working of her childhood during her happy early days with Imlay, Jacobs writes, "she had not been created to suffer. Love could—*would*—face down even the most dire external events." In cheering on her heroine, though, she ignores the hard truth of the life: Wollstonecraft *was* born to suffer, fated by family and circumstance to live through the troubles of her sex in some of their most extreme forms. Her moments of optimism were hard won, cobbled together from fragile stuff, and purchased at a high cost. Always, with Wollstonecraft, one needs to remember how easily it could have been otherwise.

Janet Todd's book, by contrast, does not allow her readers to forget that it might have been otherwise. The other selves that Wollstonecraft might have become press so closely on her account that the actual Mary Wollstonecraft seems to have lived only to tax her biographer's patience. The book is a dense, prickly interpretation of considerable historical and literary learning. The only full-length scholarly biography to date, it is full of fascinating detail, absorbing, and often surprising. The biggest surprise is that Todd has grown disappointed in her subject.

It is a peculiar case of biographical dysfunction. There are certainly writers who begin by disliking their subjects—David Herbert Donald's two-volume life of Charles Sumner is an example of this phenomenon known to American historians—but a relationship that goes bad in the course of the writing of a biography is more unusual. The shift in tone arises partly from Todd's comprehensiveness: she has delved into the Wollstonecraft archives as no one else has, and thus suffered prolonged exposure to her subject's self-serving prose. While Jacobs passes over Wollstonecraft's shortcomings, Todd totes them up sternly: the pain and the trouble that she inflicted on others, the debilities that she lashed up in herself. Unlike previous writers, who pass over Wollstonecraft's early years as an unhappy prelude, Todd pays close attention to Wollstonecraft's twisted family life and its continuing presence in her adult years.

OTHERS HAVE FOCUSED, in the feminist mode, on the tyrannical father; but Todd broadens the picture, adding in the cold, passive mother and the various self-absorbed and hateful siblings. Foremost are Wollstonecraft's two sisters, Eliza and Everina, who likewise had to make their own way in the world as working women, but found no exit. Mary was the rescuer in the family scenario, stepping in when fathers and brothers failed (as they always did); she literally rescued Eliza from the husband whom her sister claimed to despise, hiding out with her in a room in London. As she hauled herself by increments out of the hole that was the abode of self-supporting women, she promised freedom to her sisters, but she delivered nothing: they would be entombed all their lives in governess jobs.

The salvation that Wollstonecraft guiltily conjured up—a farm in America where they would live together, an exciting life in Paris, a home in England where Imlay would support them—was ever in the wings. The sisters' suspicion and anxiety turned into near-toxic jealousy; and wishing their sister ill became a form of epistolary play. Wollstonecraft, with her habit of stoking their fantasies by puffing up her own slim resources, emerges as insensitive and vain; but the backstabbing sisters are truly repellent. Eliza greeted the success of the *Vindication* by avowing that she always imagined her sister dead. Her one comment on the book was to ask of the author, rhetorically, "have you nought to say about your sister's Rights of Woman?"

In Todd's account of the sisters, and throughout her study, there is a touch of revisionism, as if she is defying the conventional feminist wisdom that sister-

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War in the Middle East

Can it happen? How can it be avoided?

The Arab uprising in Israel, the "Al Aksa Intifada", has now been going on since September of last year. Hundreds have died and thousands have been wounded. What is happening has all the earmarks of a civil war. But it isn't just the Palestinians that Israel is confronted with. All of the Arab world and Iran are backing the Palestinians and are goading them on. Any spark could trigger a full-fledged war -- which, in all likelihood, would result in all of the Arab states and Iran lined up against Israel.

What are the facts?

Israeli forbearance. Under the guidance of former president Clinton, and in order to put an end to the long struggle with the Palestinians, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak made breakthrough offers to Yasser Arafat -- he offered him the moon, "concessions" that would not have been conceivable at any time before. But Arafat, primarily interested in "armed struggle," rejected those unprecedented offers out of hand, and instead instructed his people to engage Israel in violent conflict. Israel, in the face of this violence, has shown remarkable restraint, despite our Secretary of State's unbelievable remark that Israel was using "excessive force." "Excessive force"? What would we Americans do if, say, Mexican insurgents, with the support of their government, lobbed mortar rounds into San Diego or El Paso, or dispatched suicide bombers into our major cities causing hundreds of casualties? You know the answer!

> "The stakes are high, but the road is clear. Unless Israel . . . reasserts its position of strength, today's intifada, today's war of attrition with the Palestinians, is going to lead to full-scale war in the region."

The last time America faced a threat from a neighboring nation was in 1916, when an incursion by Pancho Villa killed seventeen Americans. The U.S. promptly sent an army of 6,000 men into Mexico to capture Villa. Can Israel be expected to be patient with Arafat much longer, before he is subjected to the treatment meted out to Pancho Villa?

The sham of the Oslo Agreement. Even the most sanguine can no longer doubt that the heralded "Oslo Peace Process," sealed by a handshake between the late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, is one of the great failures of recent world history. And it failed because the Palestinians, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, have broken virtually every clause of the Oslo Accord -- from forming a standing army of at least 45,000 men, to smuggling heavy weapons into their arsenals, to releasing and failing to arrest terrorists who have committed murderous outrages against innocent Israeli citizens. And the Palestinians are not at all interested in a Palestinian state alongside Israel. They are only interested in a Palestinian state instead and in place of Israel -- Palestine, as they put it, "from the River to the Sea." That goal, at least for now, cannot be attained by conventional military means. So the strategy is to attempt to destroy Israel by a low-level war of attrition, by insisting on the "right of return" of the (by now swollen to almost four million) "refugees," and (the great hope) by ultimately sparking a general war, in which the Arabs and the Iranians would finally be able to drive the hated Jews into the sea and into final oblivion -- the same goal with which Abdel Nasser of Egypt provoked the 1967 Six-Day War.

How can such an outcome, such a war, be prevented? For the longest time, Israel has tried to appease the Arabs and also "world opinion," which is almost totally critical of Israel. Israel has voluntarily withdrawn from Lebanon and has turned virtually all of the Gaza Strip and most of the "West Bank" over to the Palestinians. But the Palestinians, and it seems the entire Arab world, see these accommodations by Israel, these endless concessions, not for what they are meant to be, namely way stations on the road to final peace, but as indecision, loss of will, and weakness. Smelling blood, the Arabs, just as Nasser did in 1967, are dreaming of a final assault against a weak and demoralized Israel.

Accommodations and concessions did not work and they will not work in promoting peace. On the contrary, Israel's perceived weakness will goad the Arabs into embarking on full-scale war. In order to avoid such a war, Israel needs to reassume its previous stance of deterrence. Specifically, Ariel Sharon, whom the Israeli people chose for his proven strength and decisiveness, should initiate policies by which, among other actions, suicide bombers would be buried in potter's fields, rather than being returned to their relatives, who turn their funerals into frenzied demonstrations; freeze the financial assets of the Palestinian Authority, of Arafat, and of the PLO; prevent P.A. officials (including Arafat) from returning to the territory now controlled by the P.A.; permit no transportation of people or goods beyond basic necessities; shut off utilities to the P.A. Then he should implement the death penalty against murderers and seize weapons from the P.A., making sure that no more weapons reach it. He should reoccupy areas from which gunfire or missiles are shot; seize the P.A.'s illegal offices in Jerusalem and its infrastructure and villages from which attacks are launched; capture or otherwise dispose of P.A. leadership. The stakes are high, but the road is clear. Unless Israel takes steps to deter its enemies, and unless it reasserts its position of strength, today's intifada, today's war of attrition with the Palestinians, is going to lead to full-scale war in the region.

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hood is powerful. Indeed, Wollstonecraft's sisters turn out to be as vicious as her worst political enemies. Still, one might more profitably understand the relationship not just psychologically, as Todd does (stressing what Wollstonecraft did to provoke the hostility), but historically. This was a society in which the opposition between male power and female dependence was stark, and in which women were not-so-subliminally despised. It is not surprising that Wollstonecraft would see the rescuer role, glittering with masculine derring-do, as necessary and attractive, or that she should botch it so badly. Todd might recall the context: for all Wollstonecraft's boasting, she was, for most of her brief life, just another woman teetering on the edge.

THE BIOGRAPHER'S TURN around the subject, to size her up from the angle of different relations, is necessary to any fully realized portrait. Yet it is important to keep moving. Weirdly, Todd falls into the family quarrels, faulting Wollstonecraft in asides and throwaway lines; she seems to take sides with the sisters, or with anyone else who disliked Wollstonecraft. So when the sisters fume because Mary does not write, Todd finds in their favor. "Mary imagined no subjectivity outside her own," she observes. "While experiencing to the full her particular neediness, she feared others' neediness." And when the sisters slip into malevolence, it is because they are too much like Mary. She finds Eliza (the more noxious of the two whiners) and Mary to be two peas in a pod: "self-pitying, self-regarding, clever and petulant, both apt to see their sufferings as unique, and both extreme when provoked." Yet Eliza was a governess and stayed a governess. Mary was the founding intellect of modern feminism. Sometimes, like a self-interested family member in the thick of a feud, Todd loses interest in any distinction conferred by the wider world.

Todd is less critical of Wollstonecraft's love affairs. Her portraits of Imlay and Godwin are scrupulous, providing for the first time tangible images of men who were more complicated than the villain and the Prince Charming handed down in Wollstonecraft lore. Imlay, a man whose character would seem to be best captured, anachronistically, in twentieth-century blues laments about lowdown hound dogs, comes off as something of an innocent, a feckless fellow who tangled with the wrong woman. One of the surprises of the book is how happy Wollstonecraft was with him in the months before he set off on his own.

It turns out that the pair were not just erotically enthralled, they were also domestically felicitous. Imlay's letters are lost, but one can catch their tenor from Wollstonecraft's contented responses. "What a picture you have sketched of our fire-side!" she wrote when she was pregnant and he was away, again, on business. She imagined a future and a big family. "Yes, my love, my fancy was instantly at work, and I found my head on your shoulder, whilst my eyes were fixed on the little creatures that were clinging round my knees." Todd argues persuasively that Imlay also took pleasure in the relationship: "the hold of Wollstonecraft over Imlay was not as great as his over her but it surely existed."

Yet here, too, Todd insinuates harsh judgments into ostensibly neutral descriptions. Subtly, she belittles Wollstonecraft's complex reactions to Imlay's rejection: her painful shows of vulnerability, her downward spiral into self-pity and despair, her pathetic bids for independence, her entrapment in her obsession—all of which, Todd briskly allows, were understandable in a young mother facing abandonment, but also, she implies, self-induced. Like some zealous convert to *The Rules* and its "time-tested secrets for capturing the heart of Mr. Right," Todd faults her subject for bungling the handling of her man. Wollstonecraft should have known, she scolds, that "frankness and judicious evaluation of a lover's character do not attract the straying male and that intensity of affection, especially an initiatory or pursuing one, will not catch a man."

THE VEIL OF reproach obscures the fundamental interest of Wollstonecraft, in life and in thought: her stunning instinct for finding a passage to a larger life. If we had only Wollstonecraft the failed romantic heroine, the biography would be a footnote to the *Vindication*. But there remains the extraordinary relationship with Godwin. True, Godwin's fidelity has cast perhaps too radiant a glow around the marriage. Their love, Todd shows, was vexed and bumpy once the first flush of romance dissipated. Wollstonecraft never quite gave up her habits of reproach; and Godwin, who came to romance in middle age, could be pompous and clumsy.

Yet they clambered over their respective limitations, awkwardly seeking and often finding a less encumbered love. The rationalists' love letters testify to a sexually and emotionally vivid companionship, mostly untried at the time in the wider world. From Wollstonecraft, full of feeling after a night together: "Let me assure you that you are not only in my heart, but my veins, this morning. I turn from you half abashed—yet you haunt me." From Godwin, away on a trip, a little anxious that she miss him: "and now, my dear love, what do you think of me?" Wollstonecraft, in reply: "men are spoilt by frankness, I believe, yet I must tell you that I love you better than I supposed I did, when I promised to love you forever."

The worst that can be said of Todd is that she is stone cold to the beauty of these exchanges. She gives short shrift to Wollstonecraft's fumbling attempts to give up the self-aggrandizement that had always been her stock-in-trade for the humility that the partnership required. Yet her successes, partial as they were, show that she had traversed considerable spiritual ground. Her newfound ability to take in, haltingly, the free-standing terms of another's existence seems to have given her great pleasure. "He is the kindest, best man in the world," she told a friend on her deathbed.

WOLLSTONECRAFT ALWAYS exaggerated. When Godwin first met her, Todd points out, he judged her shallow because of her tendency "to make the subtle crudely clear." Typically, Todd lets the disparaging remark stand. Wollstonecraft's intellectual propositions are certainly crudely clear. Women are "vain and mean," she maintains, repeatedly, in the *Vindication*; raised solely to gratify men's appetites, provide their meals, and clean their linen; marriage is a "system of slavery"; the strongest female emotions are "spaniel-like affections." What the judgment misses is that the hyperbole, born of a shaky sense of self, stabilized slippery truths that Wollstonecraft could not otherwise get hold of.

She put matters baldly, but they were matters that, smothered in niceties, would otherwise have remained hidden. "A wild wish has just flown from my heart to my head," she wrote in the *Vindication* with studied off-handedness, "and I will not stifle it though it may excite a horse-laugh." Men and women might live in the world as like beings, she went on to suggest, except for the differences that bring them together in love. Wollstonecraft's ideas are still up for debate. Do we indeed want "the distinction of sex" to disappear everywhere except in bed? It is a Wollstonecraft kind of thought, the subtle made crudely clear; and she was not impervious to the knowledge that it would seem ridiculous. It is also a thought that anticipates a central problem of modernity. Her prescience, her vainglory, her reckless bids for happiness, and her strokes of last-minute luck: they were all of a piece with the courage and the brilliance that it took to voice those "wild wishes." ■

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Tastes of Heaven

By EUGEN WEBER

Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life by Herman Pleij translated by Diane Webb

(Columbia University Press, 533 pp., $35)

JAKOB AND WILHELM GRIMM, two German brothers, collected popular stories in the early years of the nineteenth century, and their publications began the study of what we now call folklore. The interesting thing about folk tales is that they were invented or adapted by ordinary people to tell to one another, so they reflect the values and the conditions of life at the grassroots much better than educated writings and official reports. Many tales retold by the Grimms are grim indeed, not least "Hänsel and Gretel," which begins with the problem of feeding your brood if too many children survived the high mortality of the time. Illustrating this widespread experience, a later story from southwestern France shows the parents as not necessarily wicked, just helpless.

> There were once a man and a woman who had a lot of children and little to give them to eat. They were as poor as rats. One night the man said to his wife: "What will we do with all these brats? We have nothing to give them. We must go and lose them." The next day the father led them far into the middle of a forest and said to them: "Take care of yourselves. I'm coming back to fetch you. . . ."

Of course, he never did come back. The children, Jeannot and Jeannette, were caught by a wicked witch—which was likely to happen in forests, known to be dark, dangerous, and full of robbers, wolves, and witches. Jeannot was imprisoned in the pigsty to be fattened up, and fed on pig's mash. Jeannette carried him the slop, and he tried not to eat it, but we are told that "the stuff was too appetizing for hungry children."

A lot of children were hungry, and a lot of adults have gone hungry, too, from the beginning of time well past the middle of the nineteenth century. This was one reason why, in later nineteenth-century France, frugal peasant housewives still hesitated to switch from the old black bread—heavy, hard to chew, full of bran, but filling—to whiter bread, of which one would eat more. Some called their stubbornness thrift, others called it meanness or avarice; but it was all connected with poverty, with going short, with not having enough or not being sure that there would be enough. Folk tales reflect these assumptions. When a fairy offers three wishes, the first thing that is requested is food: pots that will cook endless porridge, fairy bread that cannot be exhausted, tables or tablecloths (the latter little seen in peasant households) that set themselves with meals, cubbyholes that secrete bread and milk.

The food is always modest: porridge, suet, bread, lard, and milk pretty much exhaust the imagination of the poor. When a white dove comes to help a girl lost in a forest, the bird gives her the key to a tree and promises that she will find plenty of food. What the girl finds is "milk in a little bowl, and beside it white bread to crumble into it, so that she was able to eat her fill." In an age of rough dark bread, white bread would be a treat; still, the promised plenty sounds a little on the spare side. The fact is that, until the later nineteenth century, peasants ate little meat. They were herbivores. Carnivores typically lived in cities, or in fairy-tale palaces. In fairy stories, only the wicked eat meat, like Snow White's stepmother, who eats the lungs and the liver of a boar thinking that she is nibbling on Snow White, or like the wicked witch who plans to eat Hänsel.

One aspect of dearth is that when you have little, you are reluctant to share it with others. Altruism, generosity, kindness: they are forms of self-indulgence hard to afford without endangering a fragile family economy. This is why the girl who shares her crust with an old woman, or the poor old couple who share their soup with a wandering beggar, gain special recognition and a special reward. Consider the orphaned little girl "so poor that she no longer had a room to live in or a bed to sleep in; nothing but rags on her back and, in her hand, a piece of bread that some kind soul had given her." Homeless and destitute, she nevertheless gives her rags and the crust of bread to people who are poorer or more enterprising—upon which the stars fall from the skies and turn into dollars (*thalers*), which she gathers up. After this, "she was rich as long as she lived."

In the folk-tale world, one becomes rich by miracle or by crime: this is a zero-sum economy where prosperity (when not fairy-wrought) can come only at someone else's expense; where villagers pray that the hail should fall on the neighboring village fields; where spells are cast to shift milk from the udders of the neighbor's cows to the cows in one's own barn; where unusual productivity is left to elves, dwarfs, and other supernatural characters that spin flax, plait straw, shovel away mountains, or sort peas, like Cinderella's magic doves, while the hero sleeps or the heroine weeps. So production is limited; and cash even more so. The shortage of cash haunted many a village until a good war created a cash flow that emancipated the peasant from his debts. Until that time, the housewife kept every egg, pear, or chicken that she could get her hands on, to sell in the market and thereby obtain coins for rent, tithes, and taxes; and the peasant blamed himself for blowing precious cash on beer, wine, cider, tobacco, or snuff. The goodies grown by peasants were mostly not for them.

ALL THESE THEMES appear (mostly *a contrario*) in Herman Pleij's remarkable book, a scholarly and sumptuous discussion of once-upon-a-time fantasies of the perfect life, mainly but not exclusively medieval. Pleij does not go much beyond the sixteenth century, ignoring late modern fancies and sparing barely a glance for Hänsel and Gretel. Still, his book is important and suggestive (and a delight to read in Diane Webb's resourceful and lively translation).

Nobody knows where the term "Cockaigne" came from. Robert's authoritative French dictionary offers "end twelfth century; uncertain origin." As puzzled, but more helpful, the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary suggests "fool's paradise." That comes close to the picture that Pleij sketches; and his fools' paradises confront a harsh world head on, repudiate its actu-

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alities, and affirm their incongruous values in the teeth of inexorable reality. In dramatic contrast to the grim substance of everyday, Cockaigne is a land of ease and plenty, where the abundance signally lacking in the real world is to be freely enjoyed.

In Cockaigne, and in its Dutch cousin Luilekkerland (Lazy-Luscious-land), life is frivolous and fancy and lavish. When the rivers and the springs do not run with wine or beer, they flow with milk and honey. Roads are paved with precious stones, or else with spices, considered almost as valuable. Toil and trouble are banned; idleness is rewarded (an hour's sleep earns sixpence), and so is self-indulgence (belches and farts, too, are remunerated). Weather is mild, except when it rains meat pies, or hails sugared almonds, or snows powdered sugar. Music and dance are everywhere, and so is food.

Above all, food: mountains of buckwheat porridge or cheese, house-high heaps of candy, tables piled with provender. Delicious fruit—always ripe, sometimes ready-candied—invites picking. White bread grows on willows, horses lay baskets of eggs, donkeys excrete sweet figs, hedgerows consist of woven lampreys, and fences of chitterlings. Architecture is edible, too: the roofs are made of pancakes or custard pies, and the beams are butter. The walls are bangers or gingerbread; the windows and doors of salmon, sturgeon, and cod; the tabletops are pancakes—superior to the trenchers made of bread or wood that most eaters used. On wing, on hoof, on scale and fin, birds, beasts, and fish invite consumption. (Sometimes so do pedestrian eggs.) Grilled swallows fly straight into open mouths, and so, more appetizingly, do self-roasted geese. Pre-cooked capons beg to be gnawed; roast pigs roam the gloaming with knives in their backs, ready for the slicing.

Literature records more aesthetic delights, more refined garden groves, more delicate or dispendious clambakes; but the mass public—especially the peasant public and the itinerant storytellers, versifying vagabonds, street singers, and mock poets who catered to it—focused on gluttony. Obsessive fantasies of lavish, inexhaustible, self-replenishing supplies of food slosh around England and France, Germany, the Low Countries, and beyond. Oral traditions, narrative traditions, imagery-all-sorts etch the same stubborn preoccupation with stuffing oneself, gorging, gobbling, guzzling, gulping, and feasting, followed once one is sated by blessed collapse, as in Brueghel's *Land of Cockaygne*, which illustrates the cover of Pleij's book.

It happens that Brueghel's *Land of Cockaygne* was painted in 1567. 1566 and 1567 were also the years when the painter committed his *Massacre of the Innocents* and *The Blind*, who do not see where their blindness leads them; and when the Duke of Alba, Philip of Spain's messenger of death, arrived in a land on the brink of civil war to drive it over the brink. Brueghel's sensuous, luminous, careless canvas contradicts the fraught times during which he daubed. "Look," his picture says, "see how it could have been and how it is no longer." But Pleij does not mention this. His point is broader and, if you like, more profound.

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Dutch woodcut of a man from Luilekkerland, with an owl on his hand and a brothel on his nose

The gluttonous fantasies that Pleij parses fed on an insistent fear of hunger and scarcity. This, very reasonably, is his explanation, or chief explanation, for the food motif: collective anxieties grounded in experience. Through the Middle Ages and the early modern centuries, severe shortages wreaked havoc with European economies and lives. Dicey weather spoiled harvests; disrupted grain supplies; drove up prices; threatened scarcity, dearth, famine. The constant fear of hunger proved as disruptive as grisly experience itself. Food fantasies loomed huge over a world unnervingly concerned with food and food supplies.

It all started with the Fall—as Pleij calls it, that crucial faux pas. After it, a lapsed humankind could only dream of paradise lost, and yearn to regain it. The Scriptures, notably John's *Apocalypse*, foretold the coming of a New Jerusalem at an uncertain date, but beyond its general radiance preachers described it mostly in negative terms: no envy or hate; no hunger or thirst; no flood, fire, or lousy weather; no crippled lives, suffering, sickness, or death. To the anxious and needy masses, biblical paradise sounded a bit lean. And so, spruced up for earthly use, it became playful, ingurgitative, and gustful. Carnival, Easter, and the Feast of Fools provided breaks in the austerity and the monotony of everyday fare, and affirmed the virtues of a topsy-turvy world where sins that the Church condemned could be reveled in: drinking, dancing, gambling, lechery, sloth, and, above all, gluttony.

"Bread and cheese, curds and whey,/The bumpkin eats the livelong day," sings a late fourteenth-century "Peasants' Song." But cheese, like butter, offered only rare luxury amid more typical high-fiber swill: beans, turnips, garlic, onions, roots, and other vegetables. There would be bread, of course, and sometimes only bread. A twelfth-century French *chanson de geste*, still sung centuries later, tells the story of Renaud de Montauban, who, atoning for his sins, ate only one meal a day: barley bread and water. The penance of a knight could often prove the diet of a peasant. If the Church had not required fasting, comments Pleij, it would have had to be invented.

The Church stipulated between one hundred forty and one hundred sixty fast days a year, demanding total abstinence from meat. But common folk seldom confronted meat's temptations. For one thing, hunting was a prerogative of nobles and the rich. Peasants poached, of course; but the only hunting in Luilekkerland seems to have been in pursuit of fleas and lice. Except for holidays and their compensatory splurges, and for hog-slaughtering November, rustics observed Lent most of the year, which may be why, in Luilekkerland, Easter comes four times a year, and Lent occurs only once every twenty years. Other delicacies the bumpkins heard about more often than they

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saw. Revealingly, speculations about the origin of the term Cockaigne connect it with honey cakes (*cocanha*), sugar plums (*kokinie*), and cake (*kuchen*). No wonder that, until the other day, plump was beautiful and none aspired to slimness.

Fickle food supplies did not just incite pipe dreams of kinder, gentler worlds. The recurrent lack of nutrients and the chronic deficiencies of vitamins, glucose, and enzymes combined with spoiled food consumed for want of something better, or with leaves, bran, bark, mushrooms, toadstools, grasses, or bread doughs made of hemp flour or poppy extract, to encourage hallucinations. The Folly caustically eulogized in Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* grew up sniffing narcotic herbs. Alone or in combination with millenarian dreams, obsessions about drudgery and hunger suggested escape to dreamlands here on Earth, material paradises more alluring, and more consoling, too, than the biblical ones.

MANY A VOYAGER went off in search of Paradise, the isles of the blessed, the kingdom of Prester John; and some returned claiming to have found them. Discoverers of new worlds in the West based rapturous descriptions on images inspired by John's *Revelations* and Cockaigne. Columbus did this when his third voyage in 1498 took him up one of the four rivers of Paradise, now known as the Orinoco. Both Columbus in the Amazon forest and Vespucci in Brazil about the same time knew themselves to be near Eden. Witness the excess of food, the uncorrupted natives, and their apparent agelessness (Vespucci estimated their age between one hundred thirty and one hundred fifty), which suggested proximity to the Fountain of Youth or Healing or Rejuvenation—another appurtenance of Cockaigne as of Paradise. As for North America, Pleij tells us that it continued to be described as Luilekkerland even after it became the U.S. of A.

Fairy geographies and fairy anthropologies spawned a torrent of accounts. Not the least of them were Lucian of Samosata's second-century island that sports rivers of perfume as well as wine and milk, vines that give grapes twelve times a year, and wheat tipped off by loaves of bread; Mohammed's revelation of Allah's paradise full of precious stones and even more precious water, gastronomic delights, and lots of virgins; the voyages of St. Brendan, the sixth-century Irish monk who sailed to the Isles of Promise (the Canaries?); Tannhäuser's ill-fated visit to Venusberg and its equal-opportunity sex; Marco Polo's account of the Old Man of the Mountain and his suicidal *hashashins*; and Boccaccio's mid-fourteenth-century *Decameron*, one of whose tales reveals Basque Bengodi, famous for its mountain of grated parmesan, its river of wine, vines tied up with sausages, and millstones that, when mounted on a ring, granted their wearer's wishes. There are many more.

The details may vary, as when roast birds consistently fly into gaping maws: but German roast geese are basted with pepper, French ones with garlic, and Dutch ones come neat. In the Italian *Cuccagna*, pastries sprout along the roads, and ravioli and other types of pasta spring from the bowels of a volcano boiling with broth, roll down cheese-covered slopes, and fall into a vale of melted butter. In Brueghel's painting of Cockaigne, a small figure has just eaten his way through the riceberg that one must negotiate to gain admittance to Luilekkerland. But the essentials remain pretty much the same. Fountains of youth are part of the standard inventory. Herbal, curative gardens are popular, too; and so are recreational activities in Arcadia or the Elysian Fields, where it is always springtime and only zephyrs blow; and so above all are blessed idleness and gustatory activities of every sort.

MANY NARRATIVES, such as Lucian's, are parodies or satires or tongue-in-cheek moralities; others evoke a golden age by mocking the vulgar present. Yet most reflect and reject the numbing monotony of back-breaking drudgery and hankering bellies in a survival strategy that marshals variety and plenty against dearth and didacticism. As long as mass poverty and hunger endured, the hymns to succulence, delectation, and abundance endured as well, and the compensatory wish-fulfillment fantasies that Pleij describes remained recognizable to many. By the nineteenth century, however, they began to wane. Famine disappeared; diet improved; mortality fell; families became more stable; there were fewer orphans, fewer stepmothers, fewer children abandoned and left to fend for themselves, fewer stories like Cinderella or Hänsel and Gretel.

As misery ebbed and caloric intake rose, hunger became a private affair, less of a public issue, less of a motif for folk tales. Into the twentieth century, *les gros*, who had grown fat on the backs of the suffering lean, continued to be execrated. But paradises were no longer marketed on the smorgasbord promise of all you could eat. What had been realistic detail became distant and unreal; escapist fantasies became less necessary—and also less relevant, because the fantasies were changing with the times. You could have political fantasies now, of triumph and retribution, and of perfection, too. And you could get your fantasies from the press and from science fiction.

One result of this was that, by the end of the nineteenth century, when people told tall tales and fairy stories, the sprites, the goblins, the werewolves, and the witches were treated as past realities: the old folk knew them, but they had left the region about the time of the French Revolution. Topsy-turvy Carnival went the way of the fairies. It can now be found on fairgrounds accessible to all who pay the price of admission, while Cockaigne has turned into Disneyland and Club Med. Banished to children's books and children's nurseries, Luilekkerland has become the name of a chain of Dutch pancake houses. Meanwhile Herman Pleij has made a fine job of the extraordinary story. His narrative peters out around 1600, and it is sometimes repetitive; but it is rich, learned, witty, and admirably readable. ■

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Heal Thyself

ABOUT ONCE EVERY DECade, doctors and politicians replay a familiar drama. It starts with a brave and quixotic soul—a Harry Truman or maybe a Bill Clinton—launching a radical proposal to completely overhaul the nation's ailing health care system. Within months the bold, frequently well-intentioned plan is set upon by indignant physicians who try to demolish it. It happened this way in the 1940s: When Truman proposed national health insurance, the American Medical Association denounced the plan as "socialized medicine" and led the charge to defeat it. Lyndon Johnson's ambitious Medicare proposal was also strongly opposed by the AMA, though the organization couldn't muster the strength to squash it. Nixon's and Clinton's efforts produced the same sort of rebuff. No wonder Harvard sociologist Theda Skocpol once characterized the AMA as "the bitterest of all enemies of any governmentally sponsored health reforms."

RECENTLY, THOUGH, THIS HACKneyed medical-political drama has taken an unexpected twist: The long-standing feud between doctors and reformers has dissolved into a love affair. In the last few years, the AMA has thrown its considerable lobbying muscle behind the so-called patients' bill of rights. In fact, nowadays doctors are not merely supporters of reform—they are among its most outspoken proponents on Capitol Hill. In the House, the campaign to regulate HMOs has been spearheaded by Georgia's Charlie Norwood, a dentist, and Iowa's Greg Ganske, a surgeon. In the Senate, Tennessee's Bill Frist, also a surgeon, has been a key player. Although they don't see eye to eye on everything (Frist is a loyal Republican who has done his best to subvert the more aggressive patient-protection bills, while Norwood and Ganske support bipartisan efforts at compromise), all three docs share a common bond. Brandishing their qualifications, they claim unique insight into the anatomy of the medical profession. And that insight, they argue, gives them special authority to set health care policy for the country. "I've taken care of tens of thousands of patients," Frist likes to boast. "I'd fight until I got someone with a medical background and hammered some medical information into him," Norwood recalls of his own battles with managed care bureaucrats.

THESE ARGUMENTS SEEM TO HAVE convinced Beltway politicos on both sides of the aisle. After all, shouldn't the policymakers who craft health care decisions know a thing or two about the messy innards of the industry? As political analyst Stuart Rothenberg said recently about Frist, "I think the fact that he is a doctor is a humongous credential when it comes to the health care debate." But, while placing doctors in charge of health care reform sounds like an attractive idea, there's a catch. Look carefully at the resumés of Norwood, Ganske, and Frist, and you'll see that they're not just your run-of-the-mill doctors; they all belong to elite and highly specialized medical subcultures. Norwood practiced dentistry in the tony town of Augusta, rated the "second-best place to live in Georgia" by *Places Rated Almanac*. Ganske practiced reconstructive plastic surgery in Des Moines, Iowa. Frist's background is particularly interesting: He trained in surgery at Harvard and Stanford, then went on to practice in one of the highest-paying specialties, cardiothoracic surgery. He also happens to be the brother of Thomas Frist, who now runs HCA—the for-profit health care conglomerate considered by many to be the epitome of heartless corporate medicine. (Frist's father is a founder of the company.)

SO, CONTRARY TO THEIR SELFpresentation, these folks aren't coming to Washington from the "front lines" of medicine, from those places where American medical care is nasty, brutish, and short. They aren't primary care doctors from the trenches; they are specialists used to practicing in plush or remote settings. And asking doctors like these to craft health care policy for the country is a little like asking an elite band of corporate lawyers to design a sweeping set of constitutional reforms.

CONSIDER THE PATIENTS' BILL OF rights, which has consumed far more political energy over the last few years than anything else on the health care agenda. The bill empowers people who want to sue their health insurance providers—in other words, people who *already have* health insurance providers. This is a perfectly legitimate objective. But it ignores much bigger health care problems: the brazen inadequacy of health care networks for poor people, the fact that more than 40 million Americans have no insurance at all, and the fact that many of these uninsured people (plus many more underinsured Americans) lack access to lifesaving technology.

YOU WON'T SEE FRIST, GANSKE, OR Norwood doing much about *these* problems. And that's not surprising. A tertiary care doctor at a cushy academic medical center, a plastic surgeon, and a dentist in a Pleasantville suburb don't spend much time taking care of poor patients who lack basic insurance. For these more sheltered doctors, pesky insurance companies often seem like the biggest problem in American health care. And so it's hardly surprising that they have focused their energies in Congress on taming the big, bad HMOs rather than thinking of new ways to expand health insurance or subsidize clinics for the poor.

THAT ISN'T TO SAY THAT FRIST OR Ganske or Norwood are bad doctors. Nor does it mean doctors can't play a meaningful role in health care reform. But for that to happen, Congress probably needs someone from the health care front lines, someone with a different set of "unique experiences" than the current crop of physician-politicians.

WHAT SORT OF DOCTOR DO I HAVE IN mind? If I truly wanted to ferret out the most shameful defects in American health care, I might ask a colleague of mine who works in the emergency room—a colleague who treats hundreds of cases of completely preventable diseases each week. Or I might ask a pediatrician friend who, on returning from a medical trip to inner-city Los Angeles a few years ago, felt as though he had just been to a foreign country. In fact, last week I ran a snap poll among my physician friends to see precisely what sort of doctors they would like to see framing Washington's health care policy debates. Primary care doctor came out on top. Psychiatrist and pediatrician were on the list, too. And cardiothoracic surgeon? Plastic surgeon? Dentist? Most of my peers put them at the bottom of the list. Beltway pols and pundits should take note—unless, of course, they don't care what doctors think.

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Joyce Thompson chose a school for her daughter, Nora, through the Cleveland Scholarship Program.

Parental School Choice Is Widespread — Unless You're Poor

Many parents *choose* the school that their children attend. For some, this involves moving to a neighborhood with high quality public schools. For others, it means enrolling children in a private school. Still others use public and private schools.

The fact that school choice is widespread helps explain a recent poll showing that a majority of parents are satisfied with schools that their children attend. This definitely is good news for these families.

Unfortunately, the same poll found that one in three parents give a grade of C, D, or F to the school that their children attend. Clearly, parents don't knowingly *choose* an "average," "below average," or "failing" school. Rather, these parents — often in households with limited income — simply don't have options that are widely available to other families. These parents have little choice beyond the school assigned to their children by the government.

The Black Alliance for Educational Options **(BAEO)** wants all parents to have the kinds of educational choices that many parents now take for granted. **BAEO** is a national, nonpartisan membership organization whose mission is to actively support parental choice to empower families and increase educational options for Black children.

Our children are our most precious resource. It is our responsibility to love them, nurture them and protect them. It is also our responsibility to ensure that they are properly educated. Without a good education, they will have no real chance to engage in the practice of freedom: the process of engaging in the fight to transform their world.

To learn more about the kinds of educational options that **BAEO** supports, please visit our new website at www.baeo.org.

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For more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org or www.baeo.org

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TO GO DEEP INTO THE NORTH SLOPE WHERE THE OIL IS, YOU NEED A LOT OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND, OF COURSE, A ROAD TO RUN IT ON. SO WE USE THE WATER AND ICE ALREADY THERE TO BUILD ONE. BUT LONG BEFORE THAT, WE USE INFRARED TECHNOLOGY NORMALLY USED TO MONITOR PIPELINES TO LOOK FOR POLAR BEAR DENS. AND WHEN WE DO FIND THEM, WE GO ELSEWHERE, LEAVING MOTHERS AND CUBS SNUG IN THEIR BEDS. IN FOUR MONTHS, THE CUBS VENTURE OUT. THE ICE ROAD MELTS. IT'S SPRING IN ALASKA AGAIN. AND IT'S LIKE WE'VE NEVER BEEN THERE AT ALL. | phillips66.com

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